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# Adibasi

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First meeting of the Reorganized Tribes Advisory Council

# ADIBASI

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## EDITORIAL

Recently a good deal of emphasis is laid on the scientific approach to tribal welfare. Since independence, tribal welfare work in our country is being done by official and non-official agencies. Prior to independence some of the erstwhile provincial Governments used to formulate a few special programmes for tribal welfare. The plight of tribals particularly their economic and social backwardness leading to considerable indebtedness was widely decried. Their debts mounted to such a degree, that they were obliged to bind themselves as serfs (Doti or Sagri) to their creditors. They set their lands to the cunning non-tribals, and the regulations forbidding alienation of their lands in practice were of little help to them. The plight of the tribals, who were disfranchised under the Government of India Act, 1935, was ventilated by eminent social workers like late A. B. Thakkar. Mahatma Gandhi lent his full support for the cause of the tribals. From early thirties, selfless and dedicated social workers organised welfare work among the tribals in various parts of the country which

provided background for the present expanded tribal welfare programme of the State.

Thus we find today social workers under Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, Ramabai Seva Mandal, Bhail Seva Mandal, Nabajiban Mandal and Sarvodaya Mandal, etc., are engaged in tribal welfare work in various parts of the country. However, after independence the State has come forward to safeguard the interests of tribals keeping in line with the Directives of the State Policy and other mandatory provisions in the constitution. The non-official workers are no doubt encouraged through financial help from the State, but the main bulk of the development programme is implemented by the State Governments. The Central Government provide liberal financial assistance to the States for this purpose under Article 275.

In addition to these agencies, there is a third and quite an important one, i.e., the Christian Missions. The missionaries had penetrated into the tribal areas

quite early. They used to be patronised by the foreign rulers. They represented the tribals in the legislatures. Thus the missionaries still hold their sway over the tribals who are converted to Christianity. The Christian Missions control social and political life of the converts and even orient their economy. They also receive some grants from the State in addition to the funds they receive from international channels.

Thus today we find that all these three forces are working in tribal areas and each in its own way introduces changes in tribal areas. Nevertheless, there still remains a gap to be filled up. How and why particular groups react differently to the introduction of a new scheme, why a particular group adopts a change, and another neighbouring one does not in identical situations bewilder the official and non-official agencies.

That is why our attention is focused on scientific approach to tribal welfare. Recently, there was an annual meeting of Utkal Mahajivan Mandal at Tabarada near R. Udaigiri, Ganjam. This non-official body is the principal organisation of local workers in the State of Orissa in the field of tribal welfare. Shrimati Malati Devi and Shri Mahakrishna Chaudhury are intimately associated with this institution. The Mandal receive grants from the State Government to implement various schemes. The workers of the Mandal are in charge of centre in different parts of the State. The deliberations in the three days' conference showed the enthusiasm

and sincerity of the workers in tackling various problems of the tribes. Discussion highlighted the problem of exploitation of the tribals by money-lenders, land-owners, liquor vendors and officials. In spite of very sincere work done among them by the non-officials, the fact remains that the tribals do not very much respond to the changes.

The conference, therefore, discussed pros and cons to find out the cause of tardy progress. It took into consideration the need of scientific approach to the problem of tribal welfare. There was a working group to discuss it. In our country Anthropologists have been engaged in studying various tribes, and their social and economic conditions since half a century. No doubt earlier scholars of Anthropology were permeated with the idea of collecting romantic and quaint customs and practices of the tribals and advocated the theory of segregation of the tribes. They are not to be wholly blamed for this approach. The time was such that the overall concept prevailing in all quarters was to segregate the tribes from the main stream of social and political life of the country. The conception of partially-excluded and excluded areas, with separate administrative machinery were the outcome of that philosophy. No doubt, the conception was changed with the changing time. The policy of segregation and the theory of loss of nerves by tribes by coming in contact with outsiders have been found to be untenable.

Segregation kept the tribals isolated, and their development was thwarted for all those years. After independence as a counter to that policy many advocated a policy of complete assimilation of the tribals. The opening of tribal areas all over the country, the extension of normal administration to tribal areas, opened for tribals flood gates of varied contacts with outsiders. Tribals, many of whom were still in state of primitive economy were instantly exposed to those contacts. They learnt many things, some good and some deleterious. It was noticed from studies of these changes among various tribes, that, whenever the changes are abrupt, and the stimuli do not penetrate into the hard core of their culture there is frustration and mal-adjustment. These lead to breaking of traditional life of the tribals and they turn to be marginal men. This is one thing which the Anthropologists do not want to generate. This is different from the idea of segregation of tribals from others.

The social workers, with their sincerity to improve the tribals, often try to introduce spinning, prohibition, etc. These are good. But by their sudden enthusiasm they approach the tribals without understanding their cultural norms, and, their efforts turn infructuous. Similarly the bureaucratic machinery introduce new schemes like colonisation, co-

operatives, purchase of their produce, without gauging values and attitudes in those traditional societies. When those schemes do not produce desired results the funds are wasted.

These are the reasons for which the social scientists are so keen to advocate a scientific approach to develop tribals keeping in line with their values, traditions and social background. There was a time when Anthropologists were misunderstood by all. But now that should not be the position. After independence the barrier between official agencies and non-official workers has been narrowed down. All the forces aim at generating common good keeping in view the ultimate development of tribals. We appreciate the move in the recent annual conference of Nabajiban Mandal to give premium on the scientific approach to tribal welfare. This is a happy augury. If our social workers and missionaries take into confidence the social scientists to advise them on right approach, their sincere and devoted efforts would not be fraught with any hazard. We, therefore, welcome this move initiated by Nabajiban Mandal and hope that other institutions in the country would not lag behind in enlisting the co-operation of social scientists in devising ways and means to develop the backward tribals in right lines.

Tasar-rearing is an ancient industry in Mayurbhanj district and several hundreds of Adibasi families living in and round the famous Similipal hills earn their livelihood from this industry. The Tasar-rearers are also found in the neighbouring district of Keonjhar particularly in Anandpur subdivision and in some parts of Bonai and Sadar subdivisions of Sundergarh district. The industry, however, attained high standards in Mayurbhanj district and was well-organised from the time of the princely rulers of Mayurbhanj.

The Tasar is woven by a kind of worms, whose original home was on Sal trees which grow in abundance in many parts of Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Chotanagpur hills. The cocoons that are woven by the worms on Sal trees are slightly bigger in size and are called seed cocoons. These seed cocoons are either collected individually by the Adibasi rearers from the Sal trees in the dense forests, or are collected through some professional dealers. From the seed cocoons the worms are taken out and laid on Aam trees in the months of July and August. There they lay eggs and multiply. After the worms grow to a certain size, they weave cocoons which are collected by the rearers and sold to business men. The main business centre for sale of cocoons is Chakulia in

Midnapur district of West Bengal. The quantities that are collected at Chakulia come not only from Mayurbhanj district but through the middlemen from the neighbouring district of Singhbhum and from two other districts of Orissa, viz., Keonjhar and Sundergarh. Some quantities are obtained also from the Sukinda jungles of Cuttack district and Nilgiri jungles of Balasore.

It is mostly the Adibasis, viz., the Santals and Khadias who rear Tasar in Mayurbhanj district and they have very interesting customs relating to this industry. There is a belief that Tasar-rearing must be done only with loans advanced by traders and not from one's own savings. This superstition must frighten traders who otherwise would not be assured of regular supply of cocoons for their business. As is usual in their economic life, the simple Adibasi folk play into the hands of clever businessmen who exploit them in all possible ways. The shrewd businessmen take advantage of the inferior economic position of the Adibasis as well as their many superstitions like animal sacrifice. They advance small sums of money in less than a month and get in return several times more in the harvest season mostly by cheap supply of various products. This is what happens also in the Tasar industry and it

is no wonder that the clever businessmen might have injected into the heads of the simple Adibasi folk that it would be wrong to invest money of one's own in Tasar-rearing. I was amazed to hear from some Adibasi leaders in Mayurbhanj that this superstition is still in vogue and even a very well-to-do Adibasi who rears Tasar must arrange a loan. It is needless to say that this loan is very faithfully repaid with exorbitant interest and cocoons worth several times more than the money value of the principal and the legitimate interest are delivered in the harvest season.

The Tasar-rearing is usually done by men-folk and women are not ordinarily allowed to go near the trees where the worms build cocoons. Women particularly during their menstrual periods are prohibited from touching those trees. When worms are first left on the Assan trees, the operation is done ceremonially and the Tasar-rearers observe fasting on the day.

The rulers of Mayurbhanj in the past were wise to recognise the importance of the industry for the economic development of Adibasis. There were strict orders to the Forest Department that areas on which a sizeable number of Assan trees stand should be demarcated, the trees counted and leased out for Tasar-rearing to individual cultivators. Such areas are known as *Ada-pahi* areas. An *Ada-pahi* area generally

contains not less than 100 Assan trees and in many cases it contains more. The Assan trees are found both in village jungles which are not reserved and in reserve forests. Rearing is not allowed in reserve forest areas as Tasar-rearing trees may have a damaging effect on other trees. In actual practice, however, some of the Adibasis do not strictly obey this prohibition and encroach upon reserve forests for Tasar-rearing, where they find a sizeable number of Assan trees. *Ada-pahi* areas are still leased out to Tasar-rearers in Mayurbhanj district by the Divisional Forest Officers. The same practice, however, is not in vogue in Anandapur area of Kancjhar district or Bonai, Bargarh or Bilsa areas of Sundergarh district where also Tasar is grown. In Anandapur area the Assan trees are not methodically leased out as in Mayurbhanj and consequently frequent conflicts occur between the Adibasis and non-Adibasis. Tasar-rearing on Assan trees requires clearance of overhanging branches of other trees standing nearby and this leads at times to the check of the growth of Sal trees which are so useful for other purposes. The non-Adibasis are more influential and they value the Sal trees more than the Assan trees. They resent the Adibasis pruning the Sal trees and in retaliation destroy the Assan trees. Such conflicts are found to be common between the Adibasis and non-Adibasis of Anandapur area and these conflicts have at times led to destruction of forests.



To save the Adibasi growers from the exploitation of the middlemen the State Government have encouraged the formation of Tassar Reareders' Co-operative Societies in all the Tassar growing areas of Orissa. There are at present 22 such Societies with a total membership of more than thirteen thousand of whom about eleven thousand belong to Scheduled Tribes. As the Tassar growers are generally Adibasis the Tribal Welfare Department has spent a sum of about Rs. 10 lakhs in the past few years both for working capital of these Societies and also for construction of godowns and maintenance of staff. About Rs. 3 lakhs has also been sanctioned as loan to some Societies in order to carry on their business. The transactions in cocoons are generally done in terms of Kahana. One Kahana is equal to 16 Pans and each Pan is 80 in number. One Kahana of cocoons, therefore is 1280 in number.

Cocoon industry had a very thriving trade two years ago but due to some mal-practices resorted to by some exporters, the Americans who were the main importers have stopped purchasing cocoons. Due to fall in exports to America the cocoons have lost a profitable market. All efforts are being made to

create fields for indigenous manufacture of silk and to improve samples. In spite of this there have been huge accumulations of stock in godowns of various Societies and the price has declined from about Rs. 80 per Kahana to about Rs. 40.

The work of the 22 Tassar Growers' Primary Societies is Co-ordinated by a State Organisation called "State Tassar Co-operative Society" which has its headquarters at Baripada. This State Society arranges marketing of Tassar cocoons collected by the Societies and also finances the primary societies for timely supply of seed cocoons and for maintenance of the Tassar reareders. Annually cocoons worth about Rs. 15 lakhs in the present rates are collected. At present there are accumulations of about Rs. 12 lakhs worth of cocoons in the hands of both State Tassar Co-operative Society and the primary societies. Utmost endeavours are being made by these societies to dispose of the accumulated stock but they are at present forced to sell at less than the purchase price in order to remove congestion in the godowns and get some money back as working capital.

The State Tassar Co-operative Society, Ltd. has started an Export Wing which has invented new designs of Tassar fabrics and

arranged to produce the improved types for supply to big cities like Delhi and Calcutta. The handloom organisations in the States of Mysore, Madras and West Bengal have been contacted for orders and are given samples of improved fabrics. Experiments are also being made to print Tasar fabrics. These printed

fabrics have been found attracting sophisticated buyers. A showroom has been maintained at the State headquarters in order to popularise the designs. In this way all that is possible is being done to keep the industry going and the industry is said to be better organised in Orissa than in other parts of India.

HARISH CHANDRA DAS

## CHANGING ECONOMY OF A TRIBAL COMMUNITY IN THE NEW CAPITAL BHUBANESWAR

The municipal area of the New Capital, Bhubaneswar, comprises of several different settlements. First, there are under its jurisdiction four congested traditional villages each of which is adapting differently to the development of the New Capital. Second, there is the old Temple Town which is clustered around temples, monasteries, tanks and traditional bazar areas. And third, there is the widely dispersed New Capital which consisted in 1952 of nine self-contained and fully developed 'Units' with fringe areas of recent growth.

This paper is the result of an analysis of ethnographic materials collected from a homogeneous tribal (Saora) community of Stripur under the supervision of Dr. Cora Du Bois, Professor of Anthropology, Harvard University, U. S. A., during the year 1951-52. Stripur is one of such four congested villages which have come within the municipal area. It is an attempt to analyse the economic changes which are occurring in this tribal village since the establishment of the New Capital.

The village Stripur is located on the western side of the capital town in Unit VII. It is bounded on the east side by a paved road to Khendagiri which meets another paved road on the north side of

the village. On the south there is a narrow street which separates the village from the Government Agricultural Farm which is fenced off. On the south-east corner of the village is the Government established Sevaram School and adjacent to it is a Government Poultry Farm. Stripur, which was isolated in the midst of jungle, is now very much a part of the capital town and is surrounded by new roads and Government buildings. Due to its location within the town, the Saoras have been brought into close contact with the modern life of the capital town.

Stripur consists of eighty-nine households which are divided into two wards, Lower Ward (Tal Sahi) and Upper Ward (Upar Sahi). The lower Sahi consists of forty-six households grouped into ten compact dwelling clusters while the Upper Ward comprises of forty-three households grouped into eleven dispersed clusters and they do not necessarily represent kin groups.

The village has a total homogeneous population of 419 persons. This figure includes 205 males and 214 females. According to age-groups there are 304 adults comprising of 96 males and 108 females above eighteen years and there are 215 children, 120 of

whom are between the age of six and sixteen and 95 of whom are under five years of age.

Traditionally, the Saoras of Siripur are wood-cutters, paddy cultivators and agricultural wage labourers. They have expressed discontent with the establishment of New Capital, because they claim that they have lost land due to it. Thirty-one of the eighty-nine households claim that some of their land was confiscated for a Government Agricultural Farm. The total figure of land confiscated which they reported came to 27 acres. For thirty-one households this would come to about 64 of an acre per family. Thirteen of the thirty-one households denied receiving any compensation from the Government, while the total acknowledged compensation came to Rs. 3,675. At the rate of Rs. 200 per acre, the total amount should have been Rs. 5,415. The discrepancy between these two figures is possible if we deduct 3 acres, which represent the double reporting. Then the sum theoretical due to Siripur becomes Rs. 4,800.

Nevertheless, obscurity attends these figures. The cases where informants reported having owned confiscated land but having received no compensation, may perhaps be due to their not having permanent right to the land, or it may have been due to the fact that they were really only habitual tenants of the land. The people of Siripur are either confused with regard to their

landholdings, or less than frank. They appear to nourish a sense of grievance, out of proportion to their loss, which may partially be explained by the fact that they regard land as a status symbol. Thus they view the encroachment of their land by the New Capital as a threat to their prestige.

As of 1962 the Saoras of Siripur own very little land. Twenty of their eighty-nine households own a total of 29 acres of wet rice land. Comparing the figure with 27 acres claimed to have been confiscated, we see that more than half of their wet rice land remains. The annual yield of such wet rice land ranges from 8 maunds, to 16 maunds per acre. The total yield for these 29 acres was 328 maunds of rice in 1962 which comes to an average of 11.32 maunds per acre. In addition to land owned by the villagers, eighteen families do sharecropping on a total of 18 acres. The total reported yield from sharecropping during the year 1962 was 94 maunds. Since sharecroppers receive only half of the yield of the land they cultivate the actual yield for the field would be 188 maunds.

Adding the total annual yield of rice from the wet rice land to that acquired from sharecropping we arrive at a figure of about 422 maunds. Using the rule of thumb mentioned above which holds that every adult requires 225 seers (5 maunds and 25 seers) of rice per year, we find that 419 inhabitants of Siripur require a total of 2,356 maunds of rice per

year. The annual yield, then, comes to only 10% per cent of the amount of rice needed. It appears from the calculation that Siripur is far from being self-sufficient and that it needs a considerable cash income for purchasing food. Even if they had the yield of rice from the land confiscated, they would still have only about 16 per cent of what they need each year.

The major occupation giving a cash return to these Sacras of Siripur is the cutting and selling of firewood. Before the establishment of the New Capital firewood was scarcer and more abundant and, as a consequence, the supply exceeded the demand and income from this source was small. But the New Capital has increased the demand for firewood and has provided a closer market for it. In fact, the collection of firewood has become a post-New Capital boom and more time is put into it than ever before.

The New Capital has also had other effects upon the traditional firewood business. Having been responsible for the reversion of jungle land, it has consequently been responsible for making wood less to these Sacras. As of 1952 they had to walk three miles west to the Bharatpur reserved forest to find firewood, whereas before the New Capital they had to go no further than from one-half to one mile away. With the reversion of land there has also been marked change in the quality of wood available. In addition, since the establishment of the New Capital, the Government of Orissa has placed

stringent restrictions on wood cutting in the area of Bhudanswar. The area had long time been Government reserved forest, but the Government had never controlled the cutting of wood in it. But since the Capital town was built, the Government has carefully restricted these Sacras' principal occupation.

Many Sacras of Siripur have become members of the Government sponsored Bharatpur Forest Labour Co-operative Society, an organization established by the Government of Orissa, in response to changes which have occurred in their traditional occupation. This co-operative organization was financed by the Government through the Tribal & Welfare Department and started to operate in 1951 with eighty tribal members. It covers the tribals of Siripur, Nagmanda, Jhaukand and has more recently been extended to a few more villages.

The Forest Labour Co-operative Society has its headquarters in Siripur and is managed by a Board of Directors of whom three are Sacras of Siripur. It operates by leasing forest plots from the Government each year and by engaging its members to fell and split trees in the forest. The split wood is then usually sold to consumers of the New Capital. The Society has operated at a profit since it began, but its profit is decreasing because of increased prices for contracting the forest coupe. Nevertheless, the wages paid to its members have increased from 25 paise for eighty pieces of split wood in 1951 to 37

price for the same amount of wood in 1962. Generally, a member earns about Rs. 2-50 paise per day in addition to which he receives an annual bonus of 25 per cent of his net profit.

Most of the splitting and cutting of wood for the Co-operative Society is done by Sripur villagers, who as a consequence receive larger bonuses than other members. In addition, the position of President and Directors of the Society are held by three villagers of Sripur. It is, therefore, apparent, that some of the Sauras of Sripur have taken an active role in the new form of employment.

The Bhanpur Forest Labour Co-operative Society supplied supplementary income as well as permanent employment for a few Sauras and it has taken advantage of wood business which is more profitable than it was before the establishment of the New Capital. It has also taught its members new business and managerial skills, but it has failed to introduce any mechanical or technical innovations into the business of collecting and selling firewood. The Co-operative Society still operates on a labour intensive, rather than a capital intensive system. Whether its members are learning a sound business practice or are merely learning how to drift along with one of Government subsidies is an important question for the future prosperity of these people will probably depend upon their ability to meet changes in the traditional occupations by means of such co-operative enterprises.

There are also many Sauras in Sripur who have continued their traditional wood-cutting business despite the restrictions on forest lands. They pay fees or bribes when directed in order to enter the forests and cut wood for the purpose of sale. They deal in five kinds of firewood. Women, for the most part, cut and bind brushwood into bundles for which they are paid from Rs.1-50 to Rs. 2. Women also cut 8 inches pieces of stick wood into bundles of forty sticks each which sell for 12 paise each. Men handle the middle-sized split wood which they cut in one foot pieces and sell in eighty pieces bundles for one rupee. They also fell big trees, which they split into two feet pieces and sell in eighty pieces each for Rs. 3 to Rs. 4 each. And finally, roots of dried trees are dug out and sold to the consumers. All but three households of Sripur are in this traditional occupation and the annual yield ranges from Rs. 200 to Rs. 800 (per household).

Thus, the response of many of the Sauras of Sripur has been to continue to cut wood in the reserved forests despite Government restrictions. Their attitude is that they are poor people and have no other means of subsistence. Consequently although they will sometimes have to pay fees, they cannot stop their traditional occupation. An extreme response to these conditions was the formation of an Legal Co-operative Society by four men in Sripur. In December 1961 they reached an illegal understanding with the forest guards which allowed them to cut one cart-load of wood in

the day time in the closed forest area and to carry it to the village at night. In addition, the guards promised to warn them if a ranger or forest officer was in the vicinity. In return they promise to pay the guards Rs. 15 to Rs. 30 each month. These men had the idea that with money they could always bribe themselves out of trouble.

The Illegal Co-operative Society was an unusually enterprising response to the external pressures which has restricted the traditional occupation of the Sacons. Its members decided that they could make a profitable business by bribing guards and cutting wood illegally. In fact, their potential monthly earnings were extremely good. Since the market price of one cart-load of wood was Rs. 30 to Rs. 35 in 1961-62, they could make at least Rs. 600 if they worked only twenty days in a month. Deducting from this sum Rs. 60 for feeding bullocks and occasional labour and Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 for bribing the guards, they would have left Rs. 510 each month. Divided equally among four men this sum gave each Rs. 127 which for these Sacons is a very profitable income.

The four members of the Illegal Co-operative Society were caught cutting wood in April 1962 and freed but, after six weeks elapsed they started again. But they were soon caught for a second time and brought before the court, and their case was still pending when the ethnographer left Siripur. Thus an attempt at private enterprise squelched. But this particular

attempt at private enterprise shows that the inhabitants of Siripur who complain that the Government mistreated them by confiscating their land are perfectly ready to mistreat the Government in return by bribing guards and cutting wood illegally.

This Sacra community is experiencing a sudden boom in the firewood business, but at the same time the forest around them is receding. In other words, the source of their boosted income will be short-lived, and the end of available woodlands will mean the loss of a traditional source of income, the loss of a savings occupation for impoverished families, and for women a loss of their economic contribution to the household. There is the danger that without this traditional occupation women may turn to such avenues of prostitution. In fact the prostitution is already rumoured to exist among them.

The establishment of the New Capital has also produced some changes in the incomes which this community has traditionally derived from the cultivation of land. The dry land near to their settlements and the jungle lands have increased considerably in importance. This change is due to the fact that brinjal and dry-land paddy which are grown on these lands, have become good cash crops.

Cultivation of brinjal is not new to the Sacons of Siripur but these have been cultivated in large quantity since the establishment of capital town. The villagers like this

cultivation because it requires very little money and little labour. They plant brinjal in July or August soon after the rains come and harvest these from about October until February. During this period they pick them about three times a week and sell to the middlemen in the field or in the Bhubaneswar and Cuttack markets. Usually they sell on a wholesale basis receiving from Rs. 5 to 15 per basket. Brinjal baskets are about four feet in diameter and one foot deep and are reasonably standardized as to size.

The inhabitants of Siripur have very little dry land for cultivation of this crop. In 1961-62 fifty-six of the eighty-one households or about 62 per cent had got Government leased land a total of 36 acres on which they were growing brinjal. These were Government lands which had been distributed to the people of Siripur in the following way. For one year these reserved lands were leased to the Bhanatpur Forest Labour Co-operative Society whose members cleared the land of trees. These lands were leased to the members of the Society for two years, one year for cultivation of brinjal and the next year for dry land paddy or cotton so that by the end of the second year they had planted teak trees on the land, supplied by the Forest Office. Thus after a two-year cycle the land was again reserved for the growth of teak plantations.

The Siripur Saoras were leased 1½ an acre each on which they had planted brinjal in 1961-62 and

would plant dry land paddy in 1962-63. Their total income for brinjal was about Rs. 19,636. Twenty-seven households reported earnings from Rs. 200 to Rs. 400, while fourteen households reported Rs. 500 to Rs. 700 each. All of these figures were provided by the informants. The ethnographer attributed these variations to differences in the quality of land, the time of planting, and the cultivation and weeding of land. Skill and diligence in marketing are likely factors also.

The Saoras of Siripur who have got Government leased land in such quantities and are cultivating brinjal are economically dependent. The villagers who own very little land of any kind have become increasingly dependent upon wood-cutting and agriculture on Government owned lands. As a result of this situation they have been brought into the economy of the New Capital to a far greater degree than ever before and are quickly becoming more prosperous than neighbouring Saoras. But for the Saoras of Siripur these sources of income are a short-lived economic boom, for the forest lands upon which they are so dependent are fast receding and will soon be closed off. In fact, the end of these boom days are in sight.

What will become of the Saoras of Siripur when the forest lands are gone is an important question. It is more likely the end of these sources of income will force them into the modern economy of the New Capital to a greater extent.



Their ability to adjust successfully to such a change will depend upon their present efforts to take advantage of new occupations available in the New Capital.

The Sacras of Siripur traditionally did seasonal hunting for such game as deer, pigs and hare in the Khairampur Forest and in the jungle area where the New Capital, spring up. Thus the building of the New Capital has been responsible for a decrease in hunting due to the reduction of forests and jungle lands. At the same time the town has produced an increase in such occupations as cart-making. The village cart-maker of Siripur, who learned his trade from a Hindu carpenter, has found that his work is in greater demand, and in 1962 he was working on a contract and wage basis.

The New Capital therefore an external pressure which has encouraged the development of several minor traditional occupations among the Sacras of Siripur. It has provided a new market for such products as firewood, bamboo and even cattle. It has also been responsible for the curtailment of land and has restricted hunting and the grazing of animals.

Siripur has been much affected by modern job crises and several of its inhabitants are now employed at new occupations. A number of persons do casual labour in Public Works Department trucks. One Sacra has become a truck driver. He started as a collector of wild bees for the Agricultural Farm, where he was paid Rs. 1.25 per day. This job gave him

access to other jobs, and later he became a Peon in the same Department. From there he took a job of truck driving in P. W. D.

Three of Siripur inhabitants do contracting which is a new avenue of occupation. They began this occupation in 1947 when the New Capital was first being built. These three persons were engaged by the contractors as masons to do the masonry work for the Capital construction. Gradually these three persons became petty contractors and they quickly earned enough money to plaster the walls of their houses, to cement the floors and to construct pillars on the verandahs. At present they have got a contracting work for repairing road in Bhubaneswar for Rs. 2000.

Another Sacra has been working as a signal helper at the Khorda Road Station since 1956. It is interesting that since his contacts with the external world he does not like to identify himself as an Adibasi.

There are other intermittent specialised occupations which have been introduced into Siripur. Some young men have got Government service. In addition, one young man works part time as a bicycle repairer. This work he earned while helping in a bicycle repairing shop. There is also in the village one Sacra who rents two houses at Rs. 2 and Rs. 3 per month respectively. This idea he learned from other renters in Unit VII of the New Capital. There are seventy-five households out of eighty-three

which do some sort of wage labour. The annual yield from such irregular wage labour ranges from Rs. 100 to Rs. 300. In some instances this represents a major portion of a Household's income while in others only a minor portion.

The New Capital has, therefore, placed heavy pressure on the economic world of the Saoras of Siripur. Its proximity to the

village has produced changes in their traditional occupations, made new occupations available, changed their landholdings, brought a new market to them, introduced them to various outsiders and drawn them a cash economy. But, most important, they have been forced into contact with a new and different world to which they must adapt themselves in some way, and thus their responses to these pressures are significant.

In the post-Independence period approach to the problem of welfare and development of the tribal communities has undergone several changes. At the initial stage the problem of tribal welfare was looked upon merely as that of doing some good to the down-trodden section of the population. It was more looked upon as a humanitarian work than as a task of national reconstruction. With the commencement of the constitution, it was, however, realised that such an approach will neither satisfy the tribal communities, nor will serve the needs of the country. There was a shift of emphasis from charity to development. But, even then, the development activities were more oriented to serve the needs of vocal individuals belonging to tribal communities. There was hardly any integrated community approach, except in matters relating to preservation of tribal cultures and ways of life. During the Second Plan period, however, the need of integrated community approach was recognised. As a result, a number of Multipurpose Community Development Blocks were introduced in predominantly tribal areas. Later on, these Blocks were renamed as tribal development blocks. The current thinking is that the Tribal Development Blocks are not viable units for integrated development of the regions inhabited by the tribal communities. Hence there

## AREA APPROACH TO THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

a shift towards having a number of Tribal Development Areas, which would be viable areas and which would be carved out, taking into consideration their ecological and ethnic characteristics, in such a manner that these characteristics can be most conveniently manipulated for the purposes of development. It is thus found that during the last two decades a shift has been taking place through phases, towards territorial, basis of tribal development from ethnic basis. The rationales of this shift are as follows:

- (1) Ethnic basis of tribal development would keep them separate from the rest of the nation. While giving full protection to the distinctive traits of the tribal communities, attempts should be made to build up an integrated community life of the tribals and their non-tribal neighbours.
- (2) While the tribal people should be provided with special assistance to come at par with the rest of the nation, such an assistance should not be looked upon as a perpetual right for the tribals. In fact continuation of special assistance for a very long time is a liability. It

will never enable the tribals to be self-reliant and self-confident. The right course would be to assist the tribals to get their due share of the benefits of economic and technological developments in the country in this connection. It is presumed that only a small proportion of the tribal population will migrate out of their habitats and reap the benefits of economic developments in other regions. As the bulk of the tribal population will remain in their existing habitats, the areas inhabited by them must be technologically and economically developed so that they can improve their conditions of life without being dependent on special privileges for all times to come.

On the face of it, the above perspective of area approach, for the development of the tribal population seems to be quite sound. There are also additional advantages of integrated area approach. It will, by linking together the operational aspects of the various schemes, maximise the benefits for the population concerned. For instance in Anaias valley of Visakhapatnam Agency, if instead of soil conservation scheme under Machkund project, afforestation scheme of Forest Department, agricultural improvement scheme of Community Development Department, forest

products marketing scheme of Tribal Welfare Department, being implemented as unrelated schemes, all of them could be implemented in a common manner much better benefits than at present could be provided to the people. It has been found that often, after graded bunds have been constructed for soil conservation, no steps are taken to introduce change in the land utilisation pattern because there is no organisational or operational co-ordination with the agencies which could have taken the follow up measures. Instances can thus be multiplied, which would provide irrefutable evidences of the advantages of area approach to the problems of the tribals.

There are, however, certain limitations in area approach, which should not be overlooked. Past experiences show that improvement of the economic conditions of a region need not necessarily improve the economic conditions of the original inhabitants of the region. Unless they are prepared psychologically and technologically to take advantage of the changes brought about, they may, in fact, suffer an impoverishment of their conditions. For illustration, mention may be made of what happened to the tribal people of North Bengal, when there was rapid growth of tea industry in that region, towards the last decade of the 19th century and the first decade of the present century. The most important tribe of the region was the Mech. They were shifting culti-

valors. With the growth of tea industry, land for shifting cultivation became scarce and most of the Mcheres resorted to outlying areas, so that they could carry on their primitive method of earning their livelihood, undisturbed. But due to the unhygienic conditions of those areas, many of them died. It is significant to note that while in 1911 the population was more than 20,000, in 1931 it came down to about 10,000. Only a small number of the Mcheres tried to adjust to the new conditions by taking up settled cultivation. Some of them became quite rich, others became landless cultivators. It is further to be noted that though growth of the tea industry created a large employment potential in region, hardly any of the local tribals took advantage of the same as they found it difficult to adjust their habits to the regularity of work in the plantation

It is obvious from the above, that, if area approach to the problems of the tribals is to be successful, care should be taken to satisfy certain pre-conditions. Some of the same are noted below :-

(1) *Social action for creating congruent pattern of social relationship*—In many areas there are certain dominant communities or segments of population who have virtual monopoly over the local resources and power structure. So long as the tribals remain under the clutches of these people they will not be directly involved in the processes of development envisaged in the integrated area

programmes. The agencies entrusted with the implementation of the schemes, will more often than not, be tempted to depend on the very exploiters of the tribals, so that the physical targets can be fulfilled at once. Thus the process of area development, itself may strengthen the holds of the exploiters and may increase the misery and helplessness of the tribals. It is therefore necessary that, before the area development programme for the benefit of the tribals of a region is launched upon suitable social actions are taken and legislations are enacted to reduce the holds of these segments of the population who would stand in the way of absorption of the maximum benefits of the developments, by the tribal communities concerned.

(2) *Growth orientation*—It is not infrequently that due to historical reasons the tribal communities have economic and social aspirations, in fields, which are not in congruence with the growth potential based on the physical resources available. In other words there may be a discordance between the human resources and the physical resources. In such a situation, development of physical resources may alienate tribal communities, from the entire growth processes. It is, therefore, necessary that at the initial stage, attempts should be made through strategic encouragement and support, to bring about desirable orientations in the attitudes of the tribal communities concerned, so that they can derive maximum benefits, out of the growth potentials of the region.

(3) *Growth strategy*—It has been found that unless the local communities have the requisite backgrounds of technology and education they cannot take much advantage of the economic developments. Area approach for improving the social and economic conditions of the tribal communities should involve phasing of the programme in such a manner that as far as possible the development of the physical resources remains in harmony with the development of the human resources. It need not mean that development should entirely depend on locally available skill and technical know-how and that till higher skill and technology have been imparted to the local people the development process should remain suspended. Obviously any such rigid position is untenable, specially when the country as a whole, must develop economically and technologically within a short time, to be able to survive physically and politically. But at the same time, it must be recognised that the benefits of all developments may be blown away, if the same take place on a foundation which contains within it the explosives of chronic dissatisfaction and frustration. In fact, every development means some dislocation, some hardship for some people and consequently some tension. But at the same time, every far-sighted planner is expected to provide safety pads for absorbing the shocks of development. What is advocated here, is the need of safety pads. In the context of every situation, it is to be examined, how much change can be brought about in the traditional

relations of a community with its resources, without causing deterioration of the material conditions of the community and without affecting the prestige and power structure of the region to the disadvantage of the community. These are the two essential strategic considerations which the planners of area development for the benefit of the tribals can overlook to the peril, not only of economic development, but ultimately of national cohesion.

Another aspect of strategy also deserves mention here. Wedded as the nation is to the goal of building up a socialistic pattern of society, there would be a natural tendency to bring the economic resources under state ownership and control as far as possible. But paradoxically, in backward regions, extension of state ownership, sometimes leads to more intensive exploitation of the local people by private individuals. This is what is happening in the case of fresh reservation of forests. Frequently the tribal communities had pre-existing traditional rights over the resources of these forests. After reservation, they are theoretically allowed to enjoy some of the rights by way of concession, but the tendency is to gradually diminish their scope of enjoyment of the rights. Frequently the reserved forests are leased to private contractors for extraction of the forest resources, sometimes the local tribals are engaged by the contractors as labourers on wage basis. Many social workers and others are of the view that the employment of the tribals

get under the private contractors, hardly compensate the loss of their economic rights over the resources of forests. Besides, the psychological loss, derived out of a sense of deprivation from their traditional association with forest, creates in them a negative attitude towards the people, and the authorities of the plains. It is difficult to say that even the establishment of forest labourers co-operative societies, in some tribal areas, has been able to remove the cynicism and misgivings of the tribals.

Unless the cynicism and misgivings that prevail among many of the tribal communities is removed, area approach for promotion of their economic and social conditions is not likely to yield much result. But how to remove the cynicism and misgivings of the tribal communities, where such cynicism and misgivings prevail? There cannot be any single answer to this question which will hold good for all the areas. The misgivings are the outcome of many historical factors, at least some of which would be of local character. One is to examine the whole social and economic history of the region, involving the tribals to find out the correct answer. But in a general way it may be stated that to avoid creating further misgivings among the tribals, it would be desirable to be more aware of certain strategic considerations. For instance

extension of the control of the 'larger society' (through state apparatus or statutory panchayat, co-operative etc.) over the traditional resources of the tribal communities should keep pace with the social maturity of the communities concerned. Even as the socialistic pattern of society, as visualised by the national leaders, there is enough scope for private enterprise. It is therefore necessary that the strategy of development of tribal areas, should encourage the growth of enterprising class from among them as well. If their resources are brought under statutory control while comparable resources of the people of the plains, remains free the tribals and other hill men, are bound to feel that discrimination is being practised against them.

In the above analysis, only some of the limitations of area approach and some of the strategic considerations which are to be kept in view while planning for the techno-economic development of the regions inhabited by the tribals, have been pointed out. There are many more planners and others interested in national reconstruction involving the tribal communities, would do well to give serious thought to the whole problem, before committing themselves to the area basis of tribal development to the complete exclusion of the ethnic basis.

## GANANATH DAS

Brother Ebnother has done well to focus the attention of readers of 'Adibasi' on a very important problem concerning backward tribes. He has ably raised the vital issue as to whether traditionalism or modernity should be adopted for the successful implementation of tribal welfare programmes with the objective of freeing the people in the shortest possible time from misery and want accompanying the subsistence economy of a static society and to offer everybody equal opportunity for a better life. In this context he has expressed the wish for a discussion on the topic of departure from orthodox education towards education for modernity and the problems of practical implementation of such education in tribal and traditionally underdeveloped rural areas.

I am not an expert on the issue, but having had long years of experience in tribal welfare work I have not been able to resist the temptation of putting down my own ideas on the subject.

Before discussing the problem of education I would like to deal briefly with the more general topic of traditionalism vis. modernity with reference to tribal welfare. It is as though by coincidence

## TRIBAL EDUCATION

( Transition From Orthodox Education Towards Educational For Modernity)

that in the same issue of the 'Adibasi' in which Mr Ebnother's thought provoking article appeared, I wrote on tribal welfare methodology. I tried to bring out that it would be difficult, nay even fallacious to lay down set patterns and programmes to suit the different tribal communities which are to be found in varying levels of economic and educational development. The wise worker I tried to make out, would do well to take note of the good work done in this field by his predecessors and contemporaries, and to avoid their pitfalls. I emphasized that it will not do to forget that the tribal communities, as also the rural communities other than the tribals possess traditions handed down from generations, and that they do have a sense of values which successive generations have cherished and maintained and developed.

I shall like to add in this connection that although a certain amount of inertia might have developed to sustain some of the traditions in the social and religious spheres, it is not that the tribals do not realize the burden of some of these traditions impose on them. On the other hand it has been noticed that they are ready even to cast them to the winds



once they are given the backing to do so in other words, although the tribals cherish their traditions, and sense of values as dearly as any others, they are not found wanting to adopt and also to adapt new ideas and methods if that suit their choice and appeal to them. That is to say that if they are convinced about the usefulness of a particular programme and find it acceptable in practice they will not withhold their participation.

I think, it is necessary at this stage to be clear regarding the connotation of orthodox education on the one hand and education for modernity' A comprehensive discussion on the topic has not only to embrace the content but also the method of education. Taking the second aspect first, we find that education was very closely linked up with the social and economic life of the tribals. It was sought to be imparted through social institutions of the tribals where the elder had the responsibility of educating and initiating the younger generation into the fuller life of the tribal community. We are, more or less, familiar with institutions like the Ghotal of the Gonds, the Ghire of the Mundas, the Durbar or Handa Ghar of the Itharus and Juangs, the Dhangda & Dhangdi Ghar of the Kondhs the Dhankuria of the Oras and so on. These are institutions which developed over the ages. They reflected the social and economic life of the respective tribal communities in a large measure. There the younger generation

received in an informal manner. The comprehensive education which was intended to develop the youngster into the full life pattern of the community covering social conduct, acquisition of skills in the pursuit of agriculture, wood craft, hunting and food gathering and so forth. It also covered the ground of various arts and crafts, including lessons in music, dance, sex and marriage that enriched the lives of the individuals in the tribal way of life.

With the growth of culture contact between the tribal and non-tribal communities the idea and practice of formal education in institutions devoted to only the teaching of the three R's spread in the tribal areas. Both official and non-official agencies including the Christian Missionaries started establishing schools whose number kept on increasing from year to year. On the other hand the increasing culture contact led to the gradual decay of the traditional institutions of the tribals which were responsible for imparting comprehensive education to the younger generation in the informal and traditional ways. There have been attempts occasionally at reviving these age old institutions and methods, as in the case of the Dhankuria in Bihar but under the unbending pressure of the wave of 'modernity' these have hardly achieved any appreciable success.

It is important to take note of the attitude of the tribals themselves in this regard. In course of culture contacts they had with the outside world, came

In contact with the members of the so-called civilized and advanced community and gathered that prosperity had come to them through the teachings of formal education received in the schools of the three R's type. The idea of imparting craft education in these schools started in tribal areas did not appeal to them, and whenever it was mooted it drew out their hostility. They jumped to the conclusion that it was intended to perpetuate them as drawers of water and hewers of wood for the benefit of the advanced non-tribal people. So they preferred the idea of starting in their area of that type of schools which were responsible for bringing about the so-called prosperity of the non-tribals.

So the process of departure from the orthodox or traditional education has started and is quite sometime is steadily going on and it will as I apprehend go on till it is eliminated and become a thing of the past. That is so far as the tribals' own orthodox or traditional education system is concerned.

The term orthodox or traditional education is also applied to the system of education now commonly in vogue. In this sense it refers to the education imparted in the schools which confine their attention to the teaching of the three R's without any programme of craft or technical education to supplement the purely theoretical education. That is the system of education which in common parlance is described as 'Clerk making' education. If brother

Eboother has this system in mind the departure from this system involves many issues. The first is the crumbling and vanishing state of the ancient system of socio-economic education discussed earlier. Its place has to be filled by some programme of education, and this has been provided by the currently traditional, or orthodox form of education. If this is to be given the go-by what should come in its place and what is also important, how far the new thing will be acceptable and useful for the coming tribal generation.

As we have noticed, the tribals wanted the prevailing system of formal education (three R's education) to spread in their areas. This has been sought to be introduced in primary and secondary stages by Government and private (including the Christian Missionary) agencies. As brother Eboother is no doubt aware these institutions have not yet become popular with the tribals. The complaint is much too often heard that the tribal parents are averse to sending their children to these schools. A few instances of exception to the missionary schools only prove the rule. This no doubt involves a paradox for we have just noticed that it was the tribals who wanted this system in preference to the system of mixed education of three R's and crafts (not through crafts) introduced in the special schools popularly called Ashram Schools established in their areas in certain tribal regions. I was once to settle a serious affray between a Primary School Teacher of such a School, and the mother of a

couple of tribal children who did not want to send them to school. It was alleged that the lady had abused and even tried to assault the teacher. Her case before me was that the children learnt nothing useful in the school, that they only worked for the teacher in his kitchen, that they were needed at home to look after the baby while she was away and to tend the cattle and poultry birds and that they should go collecting fruits, roots and leaves in the village forest to feed themselves and to supplement the household stock. According to her the teacher was robbing her of the labours of her children and practising fraud upon her.

These are all solid problems which the average tribesman has to face in his day to day life. The child of 7 to 18 years of age is actively participating the role of the youth and has a part that has got to be reckoned within the economic sphere. The question is does the school curriculum help him to assume that role efficiently and with confidence? Or does it open up before him an alternative avenue of gainful employment for the benefit of the family and in a wider sense of the community?

The content of the school curriculum has to be scanned in order to find an answer to this vital question. It no doubt provides for exercise of the mind, more especially of the memory, but little or no exercise of the physical abilities of the child. In other words the child is not required or expected to develop the skills for using his hands. he is not to

practice what he learns. He may become a philosopher, a teacher or an arm chair politician, but without any training and practice he cannot make a successful artisan or craftsman. Jobs of teachers or clerks for which he is built up are limited, and in spite of the reservation quota in services in the public sector, the extent to which he can be helped to be provided with jobs is negligible.

That involves the question of orientation of the system of education meant for the backward communities in general and tribes in particular. It is linked up with the complicated question of education policy of the country as a whole and also to the fundamental question as to whether there should be a separate system for the benefit of the backward communities or under the common programme special attention has to be given to some selected spheres.

That apart, it goes without saying that in order to help the backward tribes to attain a degree of economic progress, to rise above the sub-subsistence level of existence, it is necessary to equip them properly and what is equally important, to help them to stand on their own legs by extending a sympathetic helping hand.

The question of equipping them properly and well brings us to the crux of the problem. This will be well understood by citing one or two concrete cases. Tribal areas, for obvious reasons, have been selected for location of modern industrial projects like the Tata

Iron & Steel Co., Jamshedpur in Bihar the Bokaro Steel Plant in Orissa or the Bhilai Steel Plant in Madhya Pradesh. These are only a few examples. It can be safely stated that most of the large scale industrial projects are being located in the heart of the tribal areas. It can as most equally safely be stated that the tribals have not been able to benefit from these projects to the desirable extent. In other words, they have not been able to take full advantage of the opportunities opening up before their own eyes. That is mainly because they are not trained up or experienced in the skills required of the workers and technicians engaged in a steel plant. It is for the management of these industries, the Government and the non-official agencies to create the field for giving the required training to the tribals and to help them to acquire the required skills and to secure the footing. Even a small beginning is not a small matter, for in this field example will prove to be a hundred times better than precept, and the example of a few educated trained and well skilled technicians will inspire scores of others to emulate their example. I am convinced that they will not be found wanting in their zeal or eagerness for learning new techniques or for adapting themselves to the new horizons.

There is a very significant aspect of the problem. There has got to be taken by the forelock. The programme of introducing technical training for the displaced or other tribals in and around Jamshedpur Steel Plant for instance, should

have been launched long years ago. Had that been successfully done there or even in Bokaro and Bhilai one would not find the impoverished look of the tribal villages in these regions which are a common sight today. The scope may have reduced, but not altogether disappeared. There is not much therefore, for the worker engaged in tribal welfare to despair. The tribals have to be helped to acquire the technical skills by undergoing the training that has been or should be provided by the management or the Government. They have to acquire general education before that up to the prescribed standard and then get trained in the technical nature.

The vast majority of tribals are engaged in agriculture. Their lands are generally poor a quality from soil and irrigation point of view. A considerable number of tribals depend on what is known as shifting cultivation that they practice on the hilltops and hill-sides. It is not possible and practicable to provide all these people in alternative occupation either in industry or in settled cultivation on plain lands. The agriculture that they are doing in the plains and hills will have to be improved by adoption of scientific methods and inputs of better seeds and fertilisers where possible. For the benefit of the tribals it is necessary to start in the tribal areas, particularly where industries have not been started, schools where scientific agricultural practice and practice of animal husbandry and poultry on scientific lines would be taught.

not only in theory but also in practice. The practice of both agriculture and animal husbandry should conform to the potentials that are held by the land, climate and rainfall conditions of the tribal areas. Under agriculture, perhaps, horticulture would command the first place. Introduction of cash crops in place of traditional crops, the practice of terracing and soil conservation methods should be emphasized in the curriculum of these schools. The students after passing a certain prescribed standard of general education should find their way into these institutions. In the programme for education for modernity this wing of training of the tribals in better practices of agriculture and animal husbandry should come after the programme of technical education.

In order to attract the tribal children to the schools of general education the school curriculum has to be relieved of its monotony. This is essentially necessary for the abiding interest of the tribal children. The drab and colourless programme of studies have to be suitably interspersed with cultural programmes of music, songs and dances attuned to the social customs and geographical surroundings to the extent possible.

There should be a systematic and tenacious programme of further education in the technical school after completion of the general education. This shall be followed by an equally vigorous programme of placement of the technicians in industries. All along the line of education and training the students should receive not

only financial assistance but personal care and encouragement. This will be necessary till the number of examples multiply and they evoke response from the younger generation.

The education for modernity which thus will comprise to a large extent technical education, should not be diverted of its lab + programme of education in 'humanities'. I want to emphasize here the darker side of a programme of mere technical education. The tribal may be economically poor but he is still culturally and socially rich, and colourful. The laudable qualities of fellow-feeling and co-operation which are so much sought after in modern societies are still considered to be important social qualities in the tribe community. In our anxiety to improve the economic condition let us not be blind to the need for preserving and developing these golden qualities by emphasizing too much the importance of acquisition of wealth, which has got a native characteristic of developing an 'athens' in man.

The education for modernity must therefore plan a programme of studies in humanities and culture along with the curriculum of technical education.

For the benefit of the older generation there should be a programme of further education which may consist of evening classes in the use of instruments and implements to improve their skills and help them secure more fruitful occupations in the industries or improve the production

from their agriculture. Alongside there should be a programme of social education to widen the outlook of the order government. It should help them to be aware of the exporters who are continuously spreading their snares to suck their blood. Above all, it should try to help integration of the cultures of tribes and non-tribes by bringing home to them the good traits in the latter culture and showing to what extent the two peoples are alike and same in order to pave the way to national integration.

Thus the programme of tribal education for modernity has to be a comprehensive one and care

has to be taken not to emphasize too much the education for making money to the exclusion of those facets of education which develop the whole personality and particularly the human and cultural values.

For successfully implementing such a programme the need for a band of duly qualified and experienced teachers and workers cannot be overemphasized. This will have to engage the attention of the Tribal Welfare Administration and the Educationists for urgent action. On the measure of success attained here will depend how successfully the programme of education can be put through.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLI- CATIONS OF PUS PUNI RITUAL OF THE HILL JUANG OF KEONJHAR

### Introduction

The Juang are a Mundari speaking tribe of Orissa. Their population according to 1961 census is 21,890. The Juang of Orissakans have long since adopted its agriculture living in plains villages along with various caste groups but the autochthonous Juang dwelling on hill ranges of Keonjhar constitute one of the real backward tribes of Orissa. They live primarily on shifting cultivation and food gathering and retain their traditional cultural norms to a great extent. Their socio-economic life, rites and rituals, feasts and festivities and politics, organization are tradition-oriented. This article aims at describing Pus Puni festival of the Juang and analyses its significance of the rites in relation to other aspects of their culture.

### Preparations

Pus Puni, one of the important festivals of the Juang is observed in the month of January (Mugha) Thun, a m. p. (new) full moon date when the festival is observed in all the villages. The festival is observed after the harvesting of niger and after the villagers pay off their old debts. Each village selects a convenient day of its own after discussing the matter in the dormitory house and the day of the festival is communicated by the Dongan (an assistant to the

Arthan, the secular head of the village) who shouts loudly in front of the dormitory and announces the scheduled days of the festival so that the house may be plastered, money and grains be arranged, new clothes be purchased, guests and relatives be invited and so on.

A day prior to the commencement of Pus Puni is called *Sara Rux* (Tabooed day). On this day religious officiants of the village observe certain restrictions to maintain ritual purity for the festive days. If the wife of the Nagam (Ritual-head) or Arthan undergoes her menstrual cycle this prohibits her husband to participate in the ritual of Pus Puni. Hence, the festival may be postponed. If such situation occurs in case of other religious officiants they are not allowed to take part in the ritual but the festival is not deferred to. On *Sara Rux* night the clerics must maintain strict continence and should sleep in a separate bed from their wives.

### Rites and Rituals

The festival is celebrated for three days—the day for eating rice and offering rice in honour of the ancestors, the day of sacrifice of animals to propitiate the deities and eating cakes, and the day of blessing the villagers. In some villages the festival is consummated



Young women of Kachibari weaving in Piro-pura



In two days, the *Ahas* of the last two days, being performed in one day.

The first day of the festival is called *Tasna Aha* (Rice eating festival). The *Nagom* worships *Grom* Sr. & legends represented by stones installed near the dormitory house and offering some rice (Rice husked from un-boiled paddy), milk, molasses and lighted wicks prays that the villagers would now observe *Pas Pura* and no calamity may befall them or to their cattle or agriculture. On this day the *Nagom* and his wife and other ritual personae (*Kamandaka*) consisting of *Ardhan*, *Dangma*, *Waka*, *Adhikari*, etc., observe a fasting. *Nagom's* wife plasters her house and a portion of her courtyard with cowdung. She husks paddy after bath and winnows it in a new winnowing fan. The *Nagom* takes bath and wears new clothes. He pours five *pon* local grain measure containing two *Kgs* approximately) of paddy in the courtyard and worships it by sacrificing a fowl. While pouring the paddy, if it tilts towards his house it is believed that he may expect a bumper harvest for that year but if it tilts otherwise, the villagers may expect good harvest. After *Aha* ritual the *Nagom* sits on a new mat in the courtyard and the family-heads of the village come to greet him with gifts of paddy *Mandak* (*Ragi*), *Gumpen* or any other grains. Due to economic strain some families usually leave the village in search of employment. Those families proposing to leave the village for that year are forbidden to go in

*Nagom* with gifts as they are not recognised to be the bona fide citizens of the village. The individual family-heads pour half of the grains they bring on the courtyard in such a manner so that the pile may tilt to their side foretelling sign of prosperity for them. After *Nagom* the *Ardhan* pours the grains, and following *Ardhan* the bona fide ritual personae do so in order of seniority. Such strict hierarchy is, however, not maintained for the commoners. The *Nagom* sacrifices two more chickens in honour of their tutelary deities and the paddy contributed by him is stored in a straw bundle and preserved to be used as ritual seed by the individual families on the occasion of first-sowing ceremony. A bundle is made of straw of the hill paddy harvested for the year and the *Nagom* is offered with tobacco to set fire to the straw bundle and light his tobacco from this first fire. Before this ritual the straw may not be used as fire-bundle. The villagers also entertain the *Nagom* with liquor and after offering liquor to the deities the elderly people join the cocktail party with the *Nagom*. The head-meat of the chickens, sacrificed and the *snak* rice offered in the ritual are cooked together by the unmarried boys (*Kangprik*) and the food is to be eaten by the ritual officers and the *Kangprik*. The grains brought by the individual family-heads are distributed equally among four groups—the *Nagom*, his wife, the *Kangprik* and *Sinakri* (unmarried girls), and the villagers—each group getting an equal share.

Prior to Pus Pusi *chua* rice may not be cooked. On this day such rice is cooked in a new pot and mixed with milk and cooked-rice are offered to the male and female ancestors on the outskirts of the village. The offerings are kept in a new pot and the pot is kept on a forked branch. Returning back to the village the senior male members of the village assemble in the dormitory house and liquor is shared by all. The day is highlighted by *changs* (circular wooden musical instrument covered with hide) dance. Persons of all ages participate in the dance. Girls from *Sanakha* (cognate) village are also invited to make the dance more colourful. It is customary for the boys and girls to keep up *changs* dance overnight.

The second day of Pus Pusi is called *Alak Ala* (Cake-eating festival). Cakes are prepared out of the grains reserved on the previous day and the same are eaten by the respective groups. Cakes prepared from the village share are equally distributed among all the families of the village who went with such grains to the Nagam's house. The cakes prepared by the *Selanak* out of the share given to the boys and girls are equally distributed among the head *Ja* members of the dormitory and among those newly married persons (*Koma-thara* who still continue to be regarded as recognized members of the boys' and girls' organization by not performing a ritual and reigning from the former's association. If a new girl is to be admitted to the dormitory a share

of such cakes is given to her and from that day she is recognized as a formal member of the girls' association and assumes the rights and responsibilities like other members.

At noon two male goats and chickens are sacrificed and offered to *Tharapat* and *Burupapat* (The tutelary deities of the place). The ritual is performed at the outskirts of the village and all the drums of the village are taken out and beaten at the time of worship. The Nagam worships the deities and prays for a happy and prosperous new year. Each family contributes shares of uncooked rice (the amount depending on the number of family members). Meat of the sacrificed animals and the rice are cooked on the spot and the villagers, assemble and enjoy the communal feast.

The last day of Pus Pusi is *Goon Sanakha*, observed to guard the villagers against evils and ill-luck and to strengthen the village solidarity. This ritual is performed in front of the dormitory house. The Nagam brings six pairs of split red twigs (about three inches long and half of an inch in diameter). Half of the twigs must be dry ones. All the villagers, both young and old, and excluding those who would not remain permanently in the village at least for one year, assemble on the place. The Nagam worships *Gram Siri* (Village goddess), *Rudrapata* and *Tharapat*, praying—"Oh Gram Siri, Rudrapata Tharapat Today *Goon Sanakha* ceremony will be performed. Let

the *barabhaiki* (elderly men), the *bramiki* (elderly women), *seian kempetki* (Unmarried girls and boys), *ushiet* (children), and also *maramki* cattle and goats) be free from illness and calamities. Let there be bumper harvest in the forthcoming year. Let the jungle be enriched with plenty of wild roots, fruits, greens, and tubers to feed us.<sup>6</sup>

After the prayer, he tests omen by casting the seven pairs of lots, each pair comprising of piece of split raw sal twig and a similar dried piece of twig. The first pair of twigs is casted on the ground for the health and happiness of the *Kamandaki* (ritual officers). If one split lot is down concavely and the other one convexly a good fortune is indicated. Otherwise the lots are casted again and again till the desired position is attained. Likewise, casting is done for *barabhaiki*, the *bramiki*, *kempetki* (unmarried boys), *seianet* (unmarried girls) and for *ushiet* respectively. Then the Nagam walk around the villagers. After encircling them seven times with a pot full of turmeric water, he sprinkles turmeric water on them and a show hornbill and watch to know the direction from which the echo is heard. It is believed that the forest lying in the direction from which the echo is heard yields good harvest and thereby a patch of such forest may be selected for the current year's shifting cultivation.

#### General features and conclusion

The above description of the *Pur Purm* ritual not only gives an account of the religious rites performed by the Jungs, but it throws

light on social, economic and political aspects of the tribe. This shows, as to what extent all the aspects of culture—economic, social, religion and political—are closely interrelated with each other to make it an integrated whole, and a microscopic analysis of one of the aspects can tell much about the other aspects of a culture.

During *Pur Purm* elaborate religious rites are performed to honour the ancestors by offering them cooked food of the first crop (irrigated paddy) rice to propitiate the patron goddess of the village as well as to a host of other gods and goddesses and ghosts and spirits dwelling in hills, forests and streams. They equally test omen for plenty and prosperity for the villagers and blessing them against disease and death and misfortunes and calamities. If *Pur Purm* paddy contributed by the Nagam is considered sacred and is stored to be used as ritual seed by all the families of the village on the first day of sowing. The belief that *crus* rice and cakes made of *crus* rice may not be eaten before these are offered to the ancestors, the extent to which the Nagam and other ritual officers maintain purity for *Pur Purm* and the rites and rituals involved in sacrifices made to appease the deities, show the religious frame work of Jung mind. Living in woods and forests devoured by wild animals and depending on the mercy of nature to subsist, *Jungas* viz. the *Jungs* are afraid of various gods and goddesses, their ancestral spirits

and river and tree spirits. Negligence in proper propitiation may irritate them and open way for innumerable calamities and misfortune overtaking the life of the cattle and human beings. Hence the Juang take proper caution to appease these supernatural powers and forces through worship and sacrifice and secure their life ensuring health and happiness and plenty and prosperity.

The salient features of the Juang political organization and the authority structure are clearly manifested in Pus Punt. According to their traditions, norm age and generation determine the authority structure in a village and senior persons, senior both in generation and in age are considered leaders. The Nagam, therefore, happens to be the eldest man of the seniormost generation and next to him in status is the Andham the secular head of the village. The Nagam is viewed to be the 'lord' of the village, all others considering them subjects. On the first day of Pus Punt, the subjects' revere the 'lord' by taking gifts of rice, ragi and other grains as token of respect and entertaining him with tobacco and liquor. No villager, may prepare ropes of totia (hill-slope land) straw and light it to use the fire for smoking until. The Nagam does so on Pus Punt. Methods involved in selection of day for Pus punt by consulting in the domestic and offering of liquor in cock-tail party according to memory also tell much about the political organization of the Juang.

Pus Punt throws light on the social organization of the Juang. Besides the ritual importance, Pus Punt may be considered as the biggest festive occasion for the Juang. After the year's harvest the Juang pay off their outstanding debts and before welcoming a new year want to enjoy life by eating delicacies, wearing new clothes, inviting guests, and by dancing and singing to forget the trials and tribulations of life. In fact Pus Punt breaks the monotony of their routine life and generates new energy and zeal in them to face the hardships for the new year.

Pus Punt is the proper occasion to study the communal feeling and the co-operative endeavour of the Juang. The religious rites are performed communally by the Nagam for the whole village and all the families must contribute funds for financing the ritual. Goats and chickens may be purchased out of the funds raised from the village. The meat of the sacrificed animals and uncooked rice contributed by individual families may be cooked on a hill-paddy plot and eaten by all. Likewise cakes prepared out of the grains distributed to the unmarried boys and girls, and to the villagers are distributed among all the members of the respective group. The unmarried boys also raise contributions purchase a goat and distribute the meat among themselves giving a token amount to the families having no hanger or relax.

Certain rites of Pus Puni also are performed to strengthen village solidarity. Following Pus Puni shares of cooked rice and cakes may be distributed among the families belonging to the same major and minor Lineages. Geon Bandha ritual further consolidates their solidarity when all the villagers assemble on the plain and the Nagam, enjoining them seven times bless them for health and happiness. Any outsider or the persons intending to leave the village elsewhere in search of employment are excluded from this group. They are not allowed to take gifts to the Nagam's house, to eat cakes prepared out of the grain distributed in the Nagam's house, to join the communal feast held on the hill-paddy plot and are not blessed by the Nagam on the Geon Bandha ritual. Marriage, which is more a responsibility of the village, than the duty of the domestic guardians, may not be performed before Pus Puni and even negotiation for marriage may not be broken out prior to the commencement of Pus Puni. The organised behaviour of the unmarried boys and girls and their rites and responsibilities relating to the dormitory organization are also manifested in Pus Puni. As formal members of the dormitory they are recognised as a miniature replica of the larger village unit. Like members of other age-groups they have well defined rites and responsibilities. The boys must contribute a goat for the village feast by raising funds from among themselves, take care of the girls coming on dancing expedition to

highlight Pus Puni and play on change and dance overnight. On Akak Aka day of Pus Puni a girl desirous of becoming a formal member of the girls' association may be given a share of the cakes prepared out of the grains given to them by the Nagam on the first day of Pus Puni. Dance on an ordinary day among the boys and girls of one village becomes less colourful and stereotyped but in Pus Puni girls from bandha (marrying) villages are invited for dance and there is ample scope for the bandha boys and girls to display fun and jocular dancing.

The economic implications of Pus Puni are of supreme importance. Commencement of Pus Puni marks the beginning of a new agricultural year. Before the festival is observed harvesting of niger hill-paddy and other crops cultivated on hill clearings must have been over and the outstanding loans must have been liquidated. There must be provisions ready in every house for feasting on the festive occasion. New clothes may be purchased friends and relatives be invited and relations be purchased to enjoy the year's biggest festival. To keep the purse ready for Pus Puni the poor families may exact extra labour and save their earnings to meet contingent expenses of Pus Puni.

Most of the rites performed during Pus Puni and the taboos associated with the festival reveal the salient features of Juang economic organisation as such rites are closely associated with shifting cultivation of the Juang

and with their gleaming life. Some of the forest products may not be collected and a number of crops grown on hill clearings be eaten before Pus Punt (Broomsticks) wild grass for thatching house and some fruits may only be collected after Pus Punt. Similarly before Pus Punt eating arua rice (rice husked from unboiled hill-paddy), making arua rice with unawa rice (rice husked from boiled paddy), eating cakes prepared from arua rice, grinding of ruma (a kind of pulse), eating bil genger (a kind of poria) and using straw of hill paddy as torch for carrying fire are taboos to all and eating of mendo (veg. cakes) is tabooed for the religious officiants. The Juang have communal ownership of the forest land and each village has its own area of exploitation. The area demarcated from the time of the Raja. On the Gosa bandha tithon, the villagers are blessed by the Nagam A.I about herbol and watch to hear the echo. It is believed that a patch of forest in the direction from which the

echo of 'herbol' is heard is considered auspicious and is selected for the year's cult nation. Soon after Pus Punt peaches of such forest land are distributed to individual family heads. Ritual food for the first sowing is contributed by the Nagam on the first day of Pus Punt and bestowed in the dormitory to be distributed to individual family heads on the first sowing (Tritia ceremony).

The present article shows that cultural process is not a congregation of a number of isolated cultural traits. Culture on the other hand is an integrated whole where the different aspects—economic, politics, religion, social—are closely interrelated with each other and a study of one of the aspects throws light on the other and on the culture as a whole. Thus analysis of Pus Punt, a religious festival, of the hill-Juang reveals important traits of their social life, economic organization and political organization.

## KHAM KATAN

This study was undertaken in Kham village, Manipur State. Many case study method was used, observations in the village were supplemented by individual and group interviews with the villagers and extension workers.

Kham village is situated on the slope of a hill, on the bank of a small river Lavei and is surrounded by trees of the village reserve. It is 24 miles away from the Block headquarters at Churachandpur and is connected with it by a jeepable road.

The village was founded by Mr Kha. of Pate tribe in 1946. Mr Kha. worked as Christian Missionary for sometime but later on joined Government service in the Grow-More Food Department. His main objective so found this village was to settle near the town of Churachandpur and in this effort many of his relatives and friends from anterior areas, settled down in this village. The village was named Kham after the name of the then President of Manipur Darbar and a friend of the founder.

It is inhabited by 57 families of Pate tribe. (The Pate tribe is found in Manipur and Mizo Hills and its total population is 40,000). The total population of the village is 435; the literacy percentage is 80; the strength of the school-going children is 150. The main economy of the people is agriculture; the acreage under farming is 40, under wet cultivation 34 and under terracing 22.

## EMERGENT LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT IN A TRIBAL VILLAGE\*

Except four families all the rest have been converted into Christianity. The pates here practice monogamy and in regard to inheritance of property the rule of primogeniture is observed. The households are divided into 14 exogamous clans; the dominant clan is Toring; the clan of the village chief, 13 households belong to it, the rest are spread over 13 other clans.

### Democratization of leadership

The village-wide leadership rests with the Village Council known as village Authority, the office of the village chief who also acts as the Chairman of the Village Authority is hereditary.

The Village Authority consists of the Chairman and 5 Members. It has been democratized recently when the Government in order to make the Village Authority a democratic body, introduced election system in 1962.

In 1962 when the village went to polls, a ballot box was circulated from house to house and each adult was requested to write on a sheet the name of the person whom he thought fit to be a representative in the Village Authority. In the end the school teacher who acted as the Presiding Officer prepared a list of the suggested names with the number of persons voted for them and declared elected 5 persons securing the majority of votes.

\* Village and personal names are not real.

A list of the Village Authority members who were elected is given as below with their ages,

clan and number of families belonging to their clan --

Name	Age	Clan	Total number of families belonging to their clan
Hung (Chairman)	36	Tongat	13
Chan (Secretary)	40	Tongto	3
Pao (Treasurer)	38	Tonging	13
Thang (Member)	36	Tonging	13
Lua (Member)	34	Tonging	13
Kok (Member)	33	Dongal	4

From above it is quite clear that the Authority consists of three middle-aged, one young (hereditary Chairman) and two old persons. The very fact that the villagers elected three middle-aged persons is a clear indication of the increasing importance of age as the criterion of leadership. There are many quite old persons in the village; people did not vote for them. Some of them are leaders, by virtue of the respect of their old age and genealogical position in the clan; they themselves wanted the comparatively young people should come in the forefront.

People while voting gave a favourable consideration to the candidates' educational background, their interest in the field of development and community organization, speaking ability, power of interpreting the villagers' interest to the Government officials and other persons, etc. To make it clear it seems necessary to give short

extracts from the life histories of the elected members of the Village Authority.

(1) Shri Chan, aged 40 years, educated up to Class VI, once a President of the Pate National Council for revivifying the Pates Welfare, took active part in organizing the village school and has been an active worker. He also holds the office of Secretary of the Redcross S.B. Branch, Churachandpur. He served as Barman of S.B. as Head Constable during the last war he served as military interpreter. He is the Editor of the monthly magazine Voice of Churachandpur in Pate dialect.

(2) Shri Pan educated up to Class IX, served in Assam Rifle as Howitzer 88-54, a member of Village Church Committee and now he is interested in the development activities. He is 38 years old.

(3) Shri Thang knows many languages, English, Hindi, Manipuri and many tribal dialects of



Charachandpur. He helped the Government in training unlicensed arms and won a second class certificate from Manipur Chief Commissioner. In 1964 he organized the Village Community Centre and Children's School and acted in that as an honorary teacher till the school was recognised by the Government. He is a keen worker of the Palle National Council. He is only 38 years old. For a short-time he worked in the Government Grow-More Food and Malania Eradication Departments at Poch.

(4) Shri Lian is well known as a very good gardener and horticulturalist and advises the villagers on growing mangoes and oranges. Villagers recognize him as a leader in this field. He is a member of various special interest groups but now he is working hard to improve the piggery scheme for the village. He is an old man of 54 but quite active.

(5) Shri Kek is literate and is a good carpenter. He contributed his skill in the construction of village church and school and gives free advice on the planning of new houses, a subject in which the villagers are very much interested. Though he is old, yet very active. I found him working very hard with his tools.

In short it is quite obvious from the life sketches of the members of the Village Authority that all are educated. All have been connected with the development work in the village. One of them has not only worked for the good of the village but also for the welfare of the Palle tribe as a

whole in the capacity of the President of Palle National Council; now he is the Editor of 'Voice of Charachandpur'.

Another has been an active member of the Village Church Committee. The third has built up the school and community centre and is the founder of cultural club. The fourth has been helping the villagers by his skill in gardening, the fifth has contributed his skill in carpentry in building the village school and church.

Three out of five leaders were once in Government service and have an experience of meeting with Government officials and outsiders. One was once a military interpreter. Three of them can express themselves in English, one of them knows Hindi, Manipuri and other tribal dialects of Charachandpur Subdivision.

Clan consideration at the time of voting in elections was not all in all. When I put a straight question about it to Mr. Chan, he said "if the villagers would have voted to their own clan men, I would not have any chances to be elected because I have only 3 families belonging to my clan". But the very fact that out of 5 members of the Village Authority three belong to the dominant clan, Tonang, is a clear proof that clan had played a role in the elections to an extent, but while voting some of the villagers though could not rise themselves above the clan considerations, yet within that frame-work they voted for that clan man of theirs who was educated, had served the

community and tribe etc., as is quite clear from the given life histories extracts of the Village Authority members.

Old cum leaders still play a significant role on the marital and ceremonial front. They are called to participate in the meetings of various village organizations. But the initiative and work is always done by the Village Authority leaders and other young leaders of special interest groups.

There are two religious leaders, one for Christians and other for non-Christians. They are consulted only in religious matters and are not active as far as village development activities are concerned.

Village Authority is concerned with all types of village matters, it decides and disposes and is considered to be the last link in the Government administration. There is solidarity and oneness among the leaders of the Village Authority; they meet very often for consulting each other. All of them are quite enthusiastic for village development. As a clue from their life histories' extracts, they are educated and have served in the Government and have a long record in the village community organization and its development. The day I visited the village they were having a conference in the house of the Village Authority's Secretary and were pondering over the school difficulties. They have proved their spirit of self-reliance and interest in the village community mobilization and its development.

### Functional Organizations :

Besides the Village Authority, there are many other special interest groups:

- (a) Village Development Committee
- (b) School Managing Committee
- (c) Cultural Club
- (d) Radio Rural Forum-cum-Community Committee
- (e) Women Society (Mahila Mandali)
- (f) Young Farmers Club-cum-Youth Club-cum-V Y F
- (g) Students Organization
- (h) Agricultural Production-cum-Famine Relief Committee

These special interest groups are functioning actively and have their own elected leaders. Many of them are much profuse in the activities of the groups and they have a determination and self-reliance in their efforts.

The leaders of the Village Authority and the leaders of the various other development organizations like the Village Development Committee, School Committee etc. are in harmony with each other. They have mutual consultations and united effort for all activities. The leaders of the special interest groups act under

the directions of the Village Authority members. In fact the Chairman and the members of the Village Authority take keen interest in the activities of the

special interest groups: they are members of some of them as is quite clear from the chart given below.

Village Authority	Village Development Committee	School Committee	Cultural Club	Rural Forum	Youth Club	Agricultural Productive Committee
1. Mr. Hung (Village Authority).	Chairman	Member	.	Chairman		
2. Mr. Pao (Treasurer).						Treasurer
3. Mr. Chan (Secretary).	Member	Chairman	Member			
4. Mr. Lee	Member	Member				
5. Mr. Kok	Member	Member		Member		
6. Mr. Tang	Member	Member	..	..	Founder and Organizer	

Because of the presence of the self-reliant leadership the village has got a good impact of various development activities. In fact most of them were first initiated by the village leaders, the help of the Government and of the Block was sought later on. This is very well-reflected in the details of the following cases of development programmes introduced in the village —

- (a) Community Centre
- (b) School
- (c) Community Orchard
- (d) Upgrading Village Cattle Breed
- (e) Upgrading Village Pig-gary Breed
- (f) House Improvement Scheme
- (g) Women Society
- (h) Village Cultural Club
- (i) Pica culture
- (j) Agriculture

Cases (a) and (b)—Community Centre and School—The school has emerged from the idea of a Community Centre. Mr. Tang now a member of the Village Authority wanted to revive the old tradition of youth dormitory known as 'Ham' and organized the village young boys and girls who built up the house of the community centre or the youth dormitory (Ham) by contributing building-materials from their respective houses. On the completion of the activity, the group with a pride celebrated the occasion by giving a feast to the villagers.

Because there was no school in the village, therefore, the 'Ham' was used as children's school during the day. In the night the young boys began attending a literary class learning three R's and Hindi.

The funds for appointing a teacher were not available, so the

organiser is Mr Thang worked as an honorary teacher in the day school and an ex-military man as a voluntary teacher in the night.

After one year the Block recognised the night school as adult literacy centre and gives Rs. 15 per month to the night teacher as fee remuneration. In 1959 the Manipur Administration recognised the day school as Hindi Primary School.

Three years later i.e. in 1962 the school was shifted to a new site in the village where the villagers built a new building with their own initiative and contributions. Later on for extending it Manipur Administration gave Rs. 4,000. The Block also helped it by providing furniture in the school.

Now it is primary school up to Class VI. There are six teachers six of which two are paid by the Government and the rest four are being paid by the villagers from their own contributions.

This local contribution comes partly from various families and partly villagers contribute by working in a group on the road as labourers and also by cutting tree from the village reserve and selling them in the market. Besides it, according to the Development Committee's resolution everyone who gets a loan or any other help in cash from the Block or the Government contributes 10 per cent of it to the school. This has become a rule practised by everyone in the village willingly.

Every year the School Committee is applying to the Government through the Village Development Committee to get more financial help but in vain.

So the school, its building up and its maintenance is a very good example of a faith the villagers and the village leaders have in their spirit of self-reliance and community interest. Four teachers are being paid by the village community from their own contributions denotes a step forward on the road of progress for the village.

(c) Community Orchard—The Village Development Committee sought the help of V. L. W. in 1963 March to have community orchard in the village. After a short time 100 pears and 30 mango plants were given in the name of the Village Development Committee which authorised the School Managing Committee to execute the scheme and therefore the saplings were planted by the school children in the 2 acre plot of village common land. The Chairman School Committee looks after the orchard. A provision has been adopted by the School Committee that starting from the Chairman of the School Committee every member has to look after the orchard turn by turn for one year whoever looks after would have the right to raise crops of paddy or maize in the 2 acre plot of village common land used for orchard. When the plants would be matured then the Committee would again meet and think about

the new arrangements. Now there are 80 pairs and 30 mango trees alive and thriving; the rest have died, the reason of it is not known to the chairman and other members of School Committee who have executed the scheme. They sought the help of V. L. W. and other Extension Officers but in vain.

**d Upgrading Village Cattle Breed**—In 1961 the village got a Red Sindhi bull on 50 per cent subsidized rates by contributing Rs. 250. Almost every family has a cow. The bull is looked after and fed by each family in the village turn by turn according to the list which is monthly announced by the Chairman, Village Authority. Though there are many calves born of Red Sindhi in the village yet several of them have died. The villagers think that progeny of Red Sindhi is easily prone to get disease and die.

**(e) Upgrading Piggy Programme**—Three years back the Village Development Committee got a Yorkshire pig free of cost from the Block. Now there is one per cent Yorkshire progeny in the village and the Yorkshire pig has been lent to another village. The villagers have been very much benefited by this programme. One of the members of the Village Development Committee showed me a one year old pig, the progeny of Yorkshire and said "Already I have been offered Rs. 125 as its price but I am not asking it. I demand more, you can imagine the benefit the villagers have from this progeny."

**f House Improvement Scheme**—Shri Chan, the Secretary, village Authority has organised the House Improvement Society. After building his own house on the improved pattern, he felt that others should also be advised to have improved houses. At present, there are 10 shareholders in the society, value of each share is Rs. 50. The Programme of the society is to help every member turn by turn by loaning him amount of Rs. 500. Last year they gave it to one member of the society and he has already improved his house. After he would return the money it would be given to the other member of the society.

**g Fishery Ponds**—People are very much interested to practice pisciculture, two villagers out of their own funds have constructed their ponds also and they have applied to the Block for financial help but the Block is not in a position to help them due to the non-availability of fund for it. The idea to practice pisciculture in this village struck to Mr. Chan, one of the cultivators, who has built a pond, when he first visited Shillong in 1959. In order to know more about it he had to visit the Government Fishery Pond at Thoubai.

**h Village Cultural Club**—In 1952 Shri Thang, now a member of the Village Authority organised it to revive their traditional songs and dances, with an initial membership of 25 boys and girls, now the membership has gone up to 60. The same year they participated in the State Level Cultural Meet. Every year they

take keen part in the Republic Day and Independence Day Celebrations. The members do not meet everyday for recreation due to church activities, but they do meet thrice a week. The Block has never contributed anything to this programme.

4. Agriculture—The Village Development Committee has taken keen interest in bringing about a change in the agricultural sphere also. Ten cultivators have adopted Japanese Method of paddy cultivation, terracing is quite common 22 acres of land is under terracing the villagers are trying to leave shifting cultivation as soon as feasible.

In short in all the development programmes like the school, community hall, cultural club, breed' upgrading schemes in animal husbandry, agriculture, pisciculture, house improvement scheme, community orchard, the initiative and driving force of the village leaders is very clearly reflected. They get the co-operation of the village community in their efforts; the Block has played less important role comparatively.

### To conclude

The village has a village-wide effective leadership in the shape of Village Authority which has been democratized in 1962 only the Chairman of the Village Authority is hereditary. Several healthy trends were exhibited in the elections by the villagers. They placed great value on the new leadership qualities like

those of one's old record of village community special service and community development, educational standard, capacity to speak and interpret the village interests to the outsiders specially Government and Block officials, the attitude of helping others. Consideration of clan and kinship and age as the determining factors in voting lessened to a great extent, the old leaders willingly expressed their desire to bring comparatively young and educated men in the forefront. And, therefore, the Village Authority is a group of enlightened and well-tried leaders.

Besides this organisation, the village has various special interest groups like the Village Development Committee, School Managing Committee, Cultural Club, Radio Rural Forum-cum-Community Committee, Women Society, Young Farmers Club-cum-Youth Club-cum V V F Students' Organisation, Agricultural Production-cum-P & M I & Relief Committee. Their leadership is active and have a faith in progress and development. It works in harmony and in consultation with the Village Authority.

The leadership whether in the shape of the Village Authority or of the special interest groups, has a sense of self-reliance and initiative in mobilising the village community towards progress. In fact practically all the development programmes like school, community centre, cultural club, upgrading schemes, pisciculture, housing society, were organised

first by the leaders and later on the help of the Block or the Government was sought. In order to sustain in their efforts they have been activating and mobilising the village community successfully. Now a stage has come when the Block and the

Government are not able to meet the villagers demands in the field of development. True in all the fields of development activities of education, agriculture, animal husbandry, pisciculture, recreation and housing, the village is marching ahead.

NITYANANDA DAS

## THE HILL KHARIA OF SIMLIPAL HILLS

A Study of an Isolated Food  
Gathering Community

Simlipal Hills in Mayurbhanj district of Orissa has an area of nearly 1,100 square miles. These hills are spread over all the four revenue subdivisions of the district. The main area lies in Panchpuri subdivision. The entire belt is cut off during the rains by hill streams from all sides. River Bolang takes its origin from these hills descending through a number of waterfalls both big and small. The fall at Boraspam is the highest and the most attractive one. The fall at Joranda is another picturesque one with steep cliffs on sides. The area is full of luxuriant growth of Sal and other forests and once had the most exhaustive fauna. It was declared as a National Park during the First Five-Year Plan period.

In consideration of the vast area the population is rather scanty. In some of the valleys, there are a few settlements of Ho or Kol. Some of them are converted Christians who migrated from Chotanagpur to and around Gudgudia. There are a few Bathudi. Among the other castes and tribes there are a few others like Bathudi and Kharia and artisans who had come only to help the tribes in agricultural pursuits. Hill Kharia whose population is approximately about a thousand or so, are found only in a few centres.

Khajuri on the road from Gudgudia to Garh Simlipal is the principal centre of Kharia. Moreover there are 9 families at Joranda, 12 families at upper Barabara, 5 at Sano Makabadi and 5 at Buddha Bolang. The present study was projected to assess their social life in relation to their food gathering economy and adjustment in relation to the peculiar habitat, to suggest ways and means to ameliorate their condition.

The Kharia is an ancient tribe cascading over a large area of Chotanagpur belt, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. They have subdivisions like Hill, Dudh and Dhelki. The first is relatively backward and eke out their living by primitive agriculture or shifting cultivation on hill slopes, but primarily by food gathering. The other sections are fairly advanced and have been recently converted to Christianity. In fact there is very little resemblance between the hill Kharia and other Kharia. One is a nomad, constantly changing their settlement in search of minor forest produce. The others are settled agriculturists with well built houses, farms, etc. One looks emaciated and dejected, as their future is always charged with uncertainties. The others are fairly developed and even converted to Christianity. Hence although now divergent



groups have a common tribal name. They are widely different from each other from social and economic standards.

It could not be asserted definitely whether the Hill Kharia are autochthones of Simlipal hills. They are found in Balbhum subdivision of Bihar and other adjoining areas of Orissa. Simlipal hills are farther away from these areas. The economic life of the Hill Kharia everywhere as in Simlipal has resemblance and identity. Hence it could be construed that Hill Kharia's pursuits to collect various forest products like honey, resins, arrowroots, etc., might have guided them to Simlipal which abound with these.

Simlipal were not opened to human habitation for a pretty long time. Areas around Gudgodia and Boraspali have some ancient shrines of the Bathudi tribe. The latter are an assimilated tribal group in Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar. They revere Asta Devi in Simlipal, and stress their origin to a place near by. Their legend attributes their origin to those areas from where they had wandered to other places whether the Hill Kharia came to Simlipal after the Bathudi left the area, or at the same time when the latter were still preponderating is difficult to stress out in absence of any legendary or documentary evidence. However other castes and tribes around, describe Simlipal as the homeland of Bathudi and Kharia. The Kharia have adopted local dress and common patterns of house building, which clearly show that they have come

in contact with other tribes quite early. They also speak Oriya, and whether they had ever a language of their own, which belongs to another group is difficult to ascertain.

Towards the eastern parts of Simlipal in Udaya subdivision there are Barbor or Manhadia (a local folk name attributed due to the habit of catching and eating monkey). They are a nomadic tribal group living in conical leaf huts at the outskirts of forests. They are rope-makers and hunters. They move from place to place in the forests in search of games and berks for rope-making.

The nomadic Barbor and semi-nomadic Kharia have some similarities. These are the nomadic dwelling to forests, the gathering apparatus incumbent on a nomadic life and social adjustment peculiar to the changing habitats. Simultaneously there are wide divergences. The Barbor has a language of their own akin to Mundari. They build conical leaf huts, with a narrow passage to one side. The Kharia build houses with wooden planks and thatch those with grass. The houses are small, but are regular ones. Kharia have forgotten their language and now speak only Oriya.

Barbor migrate too frequently over a wide area. Kharia limit their itineraries only to those sites which are predetermined and often continue to live there for a few years. The Barbor are rope-makers and monkey catchers, hunting other games occasionally.

The Kharia are known as collectors of honey, resins and arrowroot. Both live on tubers, roots, honey and other produce and sell ropes or honey and arrowroots to buy grains.

In this context the adjustment of the hill Kharia particularly in Simlipala is worth discussion. As stated earlier the Kharia are not strangers to Simlipala. At present the main population in these parts are the Hos and Kols. Particularly enough the affluent Sardhals are not seen in Simlipala, although they predominate the entire district of Mayurbhanj. Hos are divided into various sections or *uwangha* or *Ratangha* and Singhbhum according to the places of original emigration. The first group denotes that they were from the neighbouring Baramahal area and came first to settle in Simlipala before other groups. However they are few in number and mostly live on agriculture and forest labour.

In the early part of the 18th century the then state administration considered seriously to populate Simlipala to facilitate exploitation of forests. There upon the authorities granted Sardhari or overland rights over Simlipala to one Peter Dubraj, a Ho from Singhbhum. He was a Christian, and was working as a village Post Master. He settled near village Astakuanr which is known as Garh Simlipal. It is said so many present settlements that the Hos from Singhbhum were induced to come to settle down in Simlipala by Peter Dubraj, who granted them lease

of land and *Amaramna* or record-of-rights. Thus several Ho settlements grew up in Simlipala.

Collaterally in other areas around Jenaibil, M. S. Barua & Co. were granted monopoly of forest contract by the Maharaja. There were hardly usable roads in the area. Labourers had to be frequently brought from B'har and other parts for forest operations. The roads required constant maintenance due to ravages of elephants and gales. After rainy season the roads were to be elaborately repaired to make them usable for vehicular traffic. The company therefore encouraged some of their labour to settle down in Simlipala. These were in early thirties. These settlers obtained record-of-rights from the state in due course. After independence there came the third spate of migration. Some Mundas mostly converted came down from Ranchi district and reclaimed forests in the area after independence. They encroached forest land without authority and built big settlements around Jamuna, Makibadi, etc. Recently these encroachers have been ousted from all those areas, which raised some political controversies between the leaders of B'har and Orissa.

In this background the position of the Kharia has to be analysed. Kharia have no land, nor they have taken to agriculture. They have been charged by traditions to collect honey, arrowroot, etc., which they sell to petty traders or in neighbouring markets. They sometimes earn some wage as day labourers in forest operations, but



Khasia Woman making Naofoh (Pajul) from Yibang

they do not show any preference towards that avocation. Only compelled by circumstances they rarely take up that engagement. On other occasions they collect tubers and roots to supplement their diet.

Arrowroots is collected from January till March. The roots are gathered in baskets and soaked in a water course for a few days. Thereafter these are rubbed on a stone and kernels are taken out after several washings to remove the peels. Then these are peeled in a hole and grounded. The soft parts are washed repeatedly and are dried up in small pellets. Honey is collected during summer months of April and May. For this the Kharja have to risk their persons. A look at the precipice at Joranda, full studded with beehives will scare a stout heart. Yet Kharja descend with ropes to tap those hives. A slight slip leads to disaster yet they risk, because collection of honey is the main source of their livelihood.

However, all these labour and risk of the Kharja do not yield all the benefits due to them. The city traders advance them grains and money and in exchange appropriate the fruit of their toil at a very cheap rate. Recently, the National Park authorities of Forest Department are collecting honey and arrowroots at the rate of Rs 1.50 per Kg. These are sold at Jashipur at the rate of Rs 4.50 and elsewhere at the rate of Rs. 5 per Kg. The traders collect these at a still cheaper rate. The economy of these transactions is not difficult to visualise. The

bargaining power of the Kharja is very low. Being in subsistence economy they have to procure food to maintain themselves. They do not practice agriculture to assure them food supply, atleast for a few months in a year. Wage-earning is limited to four months during fair-weather when forest operations continue. But there again Kharja are never preferred as a useful labour force and they exhibit little inclination for that occupation. Being ignorant of agricultural practices they are not engaged in that job by other tribes. Hence they have limited opportunity of assured income from any source. Food and other collection is a hazardous and risky job. It is fraught with unforeseen vagaries beyond human control. The forest which abound in these produce is full of wild animals and there are chances of being attacked by wild beasts. Moreover rainfall in Simlipal is widespread. There are leeches and treacherous hill streams which make passage arduous. During the rainy season the area is cut off from all sides. All these factors make food and collection of forest produce extremely difficult. Hence the Kharja have to depend on the mercy of traders and forest authorities and lose bargaining power. Particularly after declaration of National Park, hunting as a source of food supply has been discarded. The subordinate staff of Forest Department do not deal with them sympathetically.

Thus one sees the hill Kharja as a completely broken group of





Children and adults standing in a field, holding up small objects.

the new arrangements. Now there are 80 pigs and 32 mango trees alive and thriving. The rest have died. The reason of it is not known to the chairman and other members of School Committee who have executed the scheme. They sought the help of V. L. W. and other Extension Officers to its vain.

(d) Upgrading Village Cattle Breed—In 1961 the village got a Red Sindh bull on 80 per cent subsidised rates by contributing Rs. 250. Almost every family has a cow. The bull is looked after and fed by each family in the village turn by turn according to the list which is monthly announced by the Chairman, Village Authority. Though there are many calves born of Red Sindh in the village yet several of them have died. The villagers think that progeny of Red Sindh is easily prone to get disease and die.

(e) Upgrading Piggery Programme—Three years back the Village Development Committee got a Yorkshire pig free of cost from the Block. Now there is cent per cent Yorkshire progeny in the village, and the Yorkshire pig has been lent to another village. The villagers have been very much benefited by this programme. One of the members of the Village Development Committee showed me a one year old pig, the progeny of Yorkshire and said "Already I have been offered Rs. 125 as its price but I am not selling it. I demand more, you can imagine the benefits the villagers have from this progeny".

(f) House Improvement Scheme—Shri Chan, the Secretary village Authority, has organised the House Improvement Society. After building his own house on the improved pattern, he felt that others should also be induced to have improved houses. At present there are 10 shareholders in the society, value of each share is Rs. 50. The Programme of the society is to help every member turn by turn by loaning this amount of Rs. 100. Last year they gave it to one member of the society and he has already improved his house. After he would return the money it would be given to the other member of the society.

(g) Fishery Ponds—People are very much interested to practice pisciculture: two villagers out of their own funds have constructed their ponds also and they have applied to the Block for financial help but the Block is not in a position to help them due to the non-availability of fund for it. The idea to practice pisciculture in this village struck to Mr. Chan, one of the cultivators, who has built a pond, when he first visited Shadong in 1960. In order to know more about it he had to visit the Government Fishery Pond at Thobba.

(h) Village Cultural Club—In 1952 Shri Thang, now a member of the Village Authority organ set it to revive their traditional songs and dances, with an initial membership of 33 boys and girls; now the membership has gone up to 60. The same year they participated in the State Level Cultural Meet. Every year they

take keen part in the Republic Day and Independence Day Celebrations. The members do not meet everyday for recreation due to church activities, but they do meet thrice a week. The Block has never contributed anything to this programme.

(i). Agriculture--The Village Development Committee has taken keen interest in bringing about a change in the agricultural sphere also. Ten cult vaders have adopted separate Method of paddy cultivation terraceing is quite common 22 acres of land is under cultivation the villagers are trying to move shifting cultivation as soon as feasible.

In short all the development programmes like the school, community hall, cultural club, hybrid sugarcane scheme, in animal husbandry, agriculture, pisciculture, house improvement scheme, community orchard, the influence and driving force of the village leaders is very clearly reflected. They get the co-operation of the village community in their efforts. The Block has played less important role comparatively.

### To conclude

The village has a village-wide effective leadership in the shape of Village Authority which has been democratised in 1962. Only the Chairman of the Village Authority is Secretary. Several healthy trends were exhibited in the elections by the villagers. They placed great value on the new leadership qualities like

those of one's old record of village community special service and community development, educational standard capacity to speak and interpret the village interests to the outsiders specially Government and Block officials, the attitude of helping others. Considerations of clan and kinship and age as the determining factors in voting lessened to a great extent, the old leaders willingly expressed their desire to bring comparatively young and educated men in the forefront. And, therefore the Village Authority is a group of enlightened and well-versed leaders.

Besides this organisation, the village has various special interest groups like the Village Development Committee, School Managing Committee, Cultural Club, Radio Hara, Forum-cum-Community Committee, Women Society, Young Farmers Club-cum-Youth Club-cum V V F Students Organisation, Agriculture Production-cum-Parishad Relief Committee. Their leadership is active and have a faith in progress and development. It works in harmony and in consultation with the Village Authority.

The leadership whether in the shape of the Village Authority or of the special interest groups, has a sense of self reliance and initiative in motivating the village community towards progress. In fact practically all the development programmes, the school, community centre, cultural club, upgrading schemes, pisciculture, housing society, were organised



first by the leaders and later on the help of the Block or the Government was sought. In order to sustain in their efforts they have been activating and mobilising the village community successfully. Now a stage has come when the Block and the

Government are not able to meet the villagers' demands in the field of development. Thus in all the fields of development activities of education, agriculture, animal husbandry, pisciculture, recreation and housing, the village is marching ahead.

## NITYANANDA DAS

Simlipal hills in Mayurbhanj district of Orissa has an area of nearly 1,100 square miles. These hills are spread over all the four revenue subdivisions of the district. The main area lies in Panchpirih subdivision. The entire belt is cut off during the rains by hill streams from all sides. River Bolang takes its origin from these hills descending through a number of waterfalls both big and small. The fall at Haraipur is the highest and the most attractive one. The fall at Jorabela is another picturesque one with steep cliffs on sides. The area is full of luxuriant growth of Sal and other forests and once had the most exhaustive fauna. It was declared as a National Park during the First Five-Year Plan period.

In consideration of the vast area the population is rather scanty. In some of the valleys, there are a few settlements of Ho or Kolis. Some of them are converted Christians who migrated from Chotanagpur. In and around Gudgadia, there are a few Bathungs. Among the other castes and tribes there are a few others like Bathuis and Kharis and many who had come only to help the tribes in agricultural pursuits. The Kharis whose population is approximately about a thousand or so are found only in a few centres.

## THE HILL KHARIA OF SIMLIPAL HILLS

### A Study of an Isolated Food Gathering Community

Khapuri on the road from Gudgadia to Garh Simlipal is the principal centre of Kharis. Moreover there are 2 families at Jorabela, 12 families at Upper Banskari and 6 at Saur Makabadi and 4 at Buddha Bolang. The present study was projected to assess their social life in relation to their food gathering economy and adjustment in relation to the period of habitat to suggest ways and means to ameliorate their condition.

The Kharis is an ancient tribe extending over a large area of Chotanagpur belt, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. They have subdivisions like Hils, Duds and Dhols. The first group is only backward and has not been engaged by permanent agriculture or shifting cultivation on hill slopes, but partly by food gathering. The other sections are fairly advanced and have been recently converted to Christianity. In fact there is very little resemblance between the Hill Kharis and other Kharis. One is a semi-nomadic constantly changing their settlement in search of minor forest produce. The others are settled agriculturists with well built houses, farms, etc. One looks emaciated and dejected as their future is always charged with uncertainties. The others are fairly developed and even converted to Christianity. Hence although these divergent

groups have a common tribal name, they are widely different from each other from social and economic standards.

It could not be asserted definitely whether the hill Kharja are autochthonous of Simlipal hills. They are found in Dalbhum subdivision of Bher and other adjoining areas of Orissa. Simlipal hills are farther away from these areas. The economic life of the hill Kharja elsewhere as in Simlipal has resemblance and identity. Hence it could be construed that hill Kharja's pursuits to collect in hot forest produce like honey, resin, arrowroot, etc. might have guided them to Simlipal which abound with these.

Simlipal were not opened to human habitation for a pretty long time. Areas around Gudguda and Borapani have some ancient shrines of the Bathudi tribe. The latter are an assimilated tribe, group in Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar. They revere Aata Dewa in Simlipal and stress their origin to a place near by. Their legend attributes their origin to those areas from where they had wandered to other places whether the hill Kharja came to Simlipal after the Bathudi left the area, or at the same time when the latter were still preponderating is difficult to stress out in absence of any legendary or documentary evidence. However other castes and tribes around describe Simlipal as the homeland of Bathudi and Kharja. The Kharja have adopted local dress and common pattern of house building, which clearly show that they have come

in contact with other tribes quite early. They also speak Oriya, and whether they had ever a language of their own, which belongs to a distinct group is difficult to ascertain.

Towards the eastern parts of Simlipal in Udala subdivision there are Birhor or Mankadia (a local nick name, attributed due to the habit of catching and eating monkey). They are a nomadic tribal group living in conical leaf huts at the outskirts of forests. They are rope-makers and hunters. They move from place to place in the forests in search of games and herbs for rope-making.

The nomadic Birhor and semi-nomadic Kharja have some identities. Those are the nomadic life, clinging to forests, meagre material apparatus incumbent on a nomadic life and social adjustment peculiar to the changing habitats. Some elements of them are wide divergences. The Birhor has a language of their own akin to Mundari. They build conical leaf huts with a narrow passage to one side. The Kharja build houses with wooden planks and thatch those with grass. The houses are small but are regular ones. Kharja have forgotten their language and now speak only Oriya.

Birhor migrate too frequently over a wide area. Kharja limit their itineraries only to those sites which are predetermined and often continue to live there for a few years. The Birhor are rope-makers and monkey catchers, hunting other games occasionally.

The Kharia are known as collectors of honey, resins and arrowroot. Both are an ancient trade, honey and other produce and sell ropes or honey and arrowroots to buy grains.

In this sense the adjustment of the hill Kharia particularly in Simlipals is worth discussion. As stated earlier the Kharia are not strangers to Simlipals. At present, the main population in these parts are the Hos and Kolha. Possibly enough, the affluents Sarhais are not seen in Simlipals, although they predominate the entire district of Mayurbhanj. They are divided into various sections like Ramanghatia, Rajangha and Singhbhumia according to the place of origin of migration. The first group denotes that they were from the neighbouring Ramanghat area and came first to settle in Simlipals, before other groups. However they are few in number and mostly are on agriculture and forest labour.

In the early part of the 19th century, the then state administration considered seriously to popularise Simlipals as a forestland exploitation of forests. There upon the authorities granted Sardar or overlord rights over Simlipals to one Peter Dubraj, a Ho from Singhbhum. He was a character and was working as a village Post Master. He settled near a large Astakuan which is known as Garh Simlipal. It is said in many present settlements that the Hos from Singhbhum were induced to come to settle down in Simlipals by Peter Dubraj, who granted them lease

of land and Amarama or record-of-rights. Thus several Ho settlements grew up in Simlipals.

Collaterally in other areas around Jambh. M's Barua & Co. were granted monopoly of forest contract by the Maharaja. There were hard's suitable rooms in the area. Labourers had to be frequently brought from Bihar and other parts for forest operations. The roads were not constant maintenance due to ravages of elephants and game. After many seasons the roads were to be made and repaired, make them suitable for vehicular traffic. The company therefore encouraged some of their labourers to settle down in Simlipals. These were in early thirties. These were also adorned with life rights from the state to their culture. After independence there came in the 30's of migration. Some Mundias mostly converted came down from Ranch district and reclaimed forests in the area after independence. They encroached forest land without authority and built big settlements around Jambh. Makhadi, etc. Recently these encroachers have been ousted from all these areas which raised some political controversies between the leaders of Bihar and Orissa.

In this background the position of the Kharia has to be analysed. Kharia have no land nor they have taken to agriculture. They have been obliged by traditions to collect honey, arrowroot etc. which they sell as petty traders or in neighbouring markets. They sometimes earn some wage as day labourers in forest operations, but



Khawu woman with her basket (Pulao) from Pulao

they does, show any preference towards that avocation. Only compelled by circumstances, they rarely take up that engagement, on other occasions they collect tubers and roots to supplement their diet.

Arrowroots are collected from January till March. The roots are gathered in baskets and soaked in a water course for a few days. Thereafter those are rubbed on a stone and the tubers are slip out after several washings to remove the peels. Then those are peeled in a hole and grounded. The soft parts are washed repeatedly and are dried up in small plates. Honey is collected during summer months of April and May. For this the Kharja have to risk their persons. A look at the precipice at Joranda falls studded with beehives will scare a stout heart. Yet Kharja descend with ropes to tap those hives. A slight slip leads to disaster, yet they risk, because collection of honey is the main source of their livelihood.

However, all these labour and risk of the Kharja do not yield all the benefits due to them. The big traders advance them grains and money and in exchange appropriate the fruits of their toil at a very cheap rate. Recently the National Park authorities of Forest Department are collecting honey and arrowroots at the rate of Rs. 1.50 per Kg. These are sold at Jashpur at the rate of Rs. 4-80 and elsewhere at the rate of Rs. 5 per Kg. The traders collect those at a still cheaper rate. The economy of these transactions is not difficult to visualise. The

bargaining power of the Kharja is very low. Being in subsistence economy, they have to procure food to maintain themselves. They do not practice agriculture to assure their food supply, at least for a few months in a year. Wage-earning is limited to four months during fair-weather when forest operations continue. But there again Kharja are never preferred as a useful labour force and they exhibit little inclination for that occupation. Being ignorant of agricultural practices they are not engaged in that job by other tribes. Hence they have limited opportunity of assured income from any source. Food and other collection is a hazardous and risky job. It is fraught with unforeseen vagaries beyond human control. The forest which abounds in these produce, is full of wild animals, and there are chances of being attacked by wild beasts. Moreover rainfall in Simlipals is widespread. There are leeches and treacherous hill streams which make passage arduous. During the rainy season the area is cut off from all sides. All these factors make food and collection of forest produce extremely difficult. Hence the Kharja have to depend on the mercy of traders and forest authorities and lose bargaining power. Particularly after declaration of National Park hunting as a source of food supply has been discarded. The subordinate staff of Forest Department does deal with them sympathetically.

Thus one sees the hill Kharja as a completely broken group of

u ba, absolutely lacking self confidence. The vast expanse of forests in which they live and survive with numerous risks are also a thing which are added with the situations. Some may due to sympathy of a few officials they are allowed not to be persecuted but these are varied in other occasions.

A year or more ago the rights of the Khasa settlements in the Thana of Upper Barak was taken. After that Forest Department required the former area for starting a new work. The Khasa then were asked to vacate the they left to their left the things of the Khasas. Some Khasas migrated to other villages and some Khasas after being hard pressed to leave their settlements they started to migrate.

Khasas have been a little far from the Jaintia Thana since the Khasas. A few have gone to suitable places especially those to have a settlement. In accordance with modern ideas of development and culture they have to live under the various dangers and risks they are in. In fact part of them have no aspirations.

Maize, sorghum, and corresponding kinds of rice have been introduced to the area. A good amount of land is being used for such kind of growing and other modern occupations which the Khasas are busy in honey and arrowroot and so on. With some skills associated with these professions they feel the with proper observance of modern life and above the steps of better living effort of Hindoos and Christians have been adopted long since and tribal life has been asked to incorporate them. Ceremonies and festivals connected with agriculture and animal husbandry have not been adopted

Recently they have acquired dhobis and some by selling honey etc. A few Khasas who are in have also been purchased from the area to the Contingent with outsiders as Jashpur, Dangan and other trade centres have generated new ideas and values but they have not been able to bring them into the factors discussed above.

In this context it is being proposed to settle the Khasas in land and agriculture. Land is available in some places in purity. Political system is not so strict and varied by the Khasas could be easily settled in the Khasas. But this is not a simple task as Khasas have not started agriculture and are extremely uneducated and poor. A simple way of settling them is a hazardous attempt but one of the better attempts with the introduction of a group of Khasas between a terrace of light and darkness. A new variety of growth and development is necessary in the area. The Khasas are not so happy he suggests if we are to give them some land. A Khasa who is working much of the Khasas say they could have a good amount of land for growing their own crops. They have no livestock and do not rear cattle. A house is not being given to them. But more than a good part of the Khasas are not so happy.

It is the need to accept the change. Their cultural base has to be widened to incorporate the new mode of life. They have to be provided with regular housing. They must feel the pride of ownership and possession over houses and land and cattle. Hence the rehabilitation has to be planned with precision and on scientific



Fig. 10. A. Garden, B. Garden, C. Garden, D. Garden, E. Garden, F. Garden, G. Garden, H. Garden, I. Garden, J. Garden, K. Garden, L. Garden, M. Garden, N. Garden, O. Garden, P. Garden, Q. Garden, R. Garden, S. Garden, T. Garden, U. Garden, V. Garden, W. Garden, X. Garden, Y. Garden, Z. Garden.



lives. The help of an anthropologist should be imperative in such a venture.

This little community has to forsake their traditions, and age-long social values. These require to be planned with full understanding of their cultural life. The transformation of their norms and standards is not a simple affair. This is the greatest folly we generally commit while dealing with human groups. Our ethnocentrism does not permit us to give due credence to the cultural traditions of preliterate groups. Thus, our bona fide intentions fail to draw their admiration and our efforts turn out infructuous. Hence it becomes essential to take into account the imponderabilia of Kharia life and traditions before settling them in land and agriculture without thwarting their opportunity to collect minor forest produce.

Before the aforesaid aspects are fully dealt and tackled any large scale rehabilitation of outsiders

within Simliphals will do more harm to the Kharia than. In their present social and economic life exposure to abrupt and wanton change in the ecological balance will make this tribe fall prey to cunning and undesirable outsiders. Even other advanced tribes will be no exception in exploiting the hill Kharia. This, in due course will lead to total annihilation of the tribe, as has been the case in many parts of the world. Of course the present isolation is doing no good to any. But isolation has somehow kept the existence of the tribe so far. Hence before the Simliphals are opened up the Kharjas should be given the lease of settled life with associated amenities. Their collection should fetch higher price by raising their bargaining power. For this purpose the forest and district authorities should combine and prepare a plan with the help of an anthropologist. In course of a decade or so the hill Kharia could be brought to the level of other tribes in Simliphals.

## A FEW WORDS ABOUT US

A centre of Tribal Research Bureau was established at Phulbani in April, 1966. A good number of research workers and other ranks were stationed there. The centre was primarily established for the purpose of rapid survey of Tribal Development blocks in the backward tribal areas of Phulbani, Koraput, Kalahandi and Ganjam. Some normal activities of the Bureau were also extended to the centre.

From the beginning, the centre was functioning amidst various handicaps. The staff also faced difficulty in getting library and other facilities. The State Government appreciating these difficulties have decided to transfer the entire centre back to Bhubaneswar with effect from the 1st July 1967. We welcome this decision and hope that the staff who are now back at Bhubaneswar would work with greater vigour and zeal.

Professor Roger Heim, Director, National Museum and Natural History, Paris, a distinguished Mycologist, and Shri R. Gordon Wasson, a Fellow of Harvard University, are now working on mushrooms in the Santal country of Mayurbhanj. Professor Heim is an international authority on fungi. He is working for the last 15 years on the subject, through a chain of laboratories in Tahiti, French Camerouns and other parts of Africa. In course of his studies he has covered Mexico, New Guinea, and many other countries of the world, accompanied by

Sri Wasson. Professor Heim was also the President of the International Board for Protection of Nature and a jury to select the recipient of Kalinga Prize under the auspicious of UNESCO in 1966. Sri Wasson is a former Vice-President of the Morgan Union Trust, a banking concern owning a considerable interest in banking business all over the world. He is a botanist by adoption and has published two brilliant books on the subject in collaboration with his late illustrious wife.

Professor Heim is now exploring large number of species of mushrooms in the Santal country for a month. We were delighted to be asked to extend co-operation to these distinguished scientists. The Tribal & Rural Welfare Department has asked the local authorities in the district of Mayurbhanj to assist them.

The party are now working in a field hitherto not been studied to any great extent in this country. They are also finding out the socio-cultural affiliation of the tribals with the mushrooms. The Santal country abounds in varieties of medicinal herbs, and other rare species of fauna and flora which are bound to draw their attention. It is a happy augury that the distinguished mycologists are keenly interested to find out witchcraft and other magico-religious beliefs prevalent among Santals. The Tribal Research Bureau has recently studied witchcraft among the



Shri Manish Kumar Yadav, Deputy Minister, T. & R. W., visiting T. R. B. museum.

Santal in relation to the murders attributed to witch hunt. This study has revealed the hard core of Santal culture which embeds the efficacy of witchcraft in the minds of this tribe. (Adibod Vol. VIII, No. III & IV-1966-67). It is hoped that at a future date, it may be possible to take up a co-ordinated programme of study

among the tribe to cover all the aspects of their culture in relation to the environment, where they live in, and the enormous value of flora and fauna which are associated with the cultural life of the tribe. The distinguished scientists may find this study useful which will open a vista of scientific knowledge.

# OUR NEW CONTRIBUTORS

In this issue our new contributors are :—

1. Dr. B. K. Ray Burman,  
M.Sc., D. Phil.

Dr. Ray Burman is now an Officer on-special-duty in the office of the Registrar-General, India. He holds a permanent post of Deputy Commissioner in the organisation of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Dr. Ray Burman was the Assistant Director in the Cultural Research Institute, West Bengal. He has published several monographs and articles on various castes and Tribes of West Bengal. In his new role in the office of the Registrar-General of India he has guided several studies in different parts of the country.

2. Shri Harish Chandra Dash,  
M. A.

Shri H. C. Dash is now the Curator in Anthropology in State

Museum, Bhubaneswar. He passed M.A. from Utkal University in 1961. Prior to his joining in the State Museum he was working as a research scholar under Prof. Corn De Boij, of Harvard University studying the impact of New Capital on the surrounding villages.

3. Shri Ram Ratan, M. Sc.  
(Anthropology).

Shri Ram Ratan is now an Instructor in State Community Development Training Centre, Nilokheri (Haryana). After obtaining his M.Sc. Degree in Anthropology he worked as a research scholar in Delhi University. He was a Research Associate Cornell University, "U. S. A." —India project from 1953-54. From 1954-55 he supervised a Research Project (Planting Commission, Government of India) on the ex-Criminal Tribes of Delhi. For over 10 years he has been lecturing in Social Anthropology and Rural Sociology in various Tribal Orientation and Study Centres.